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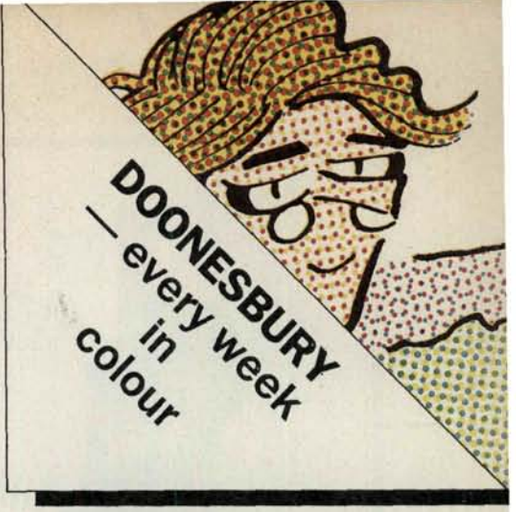

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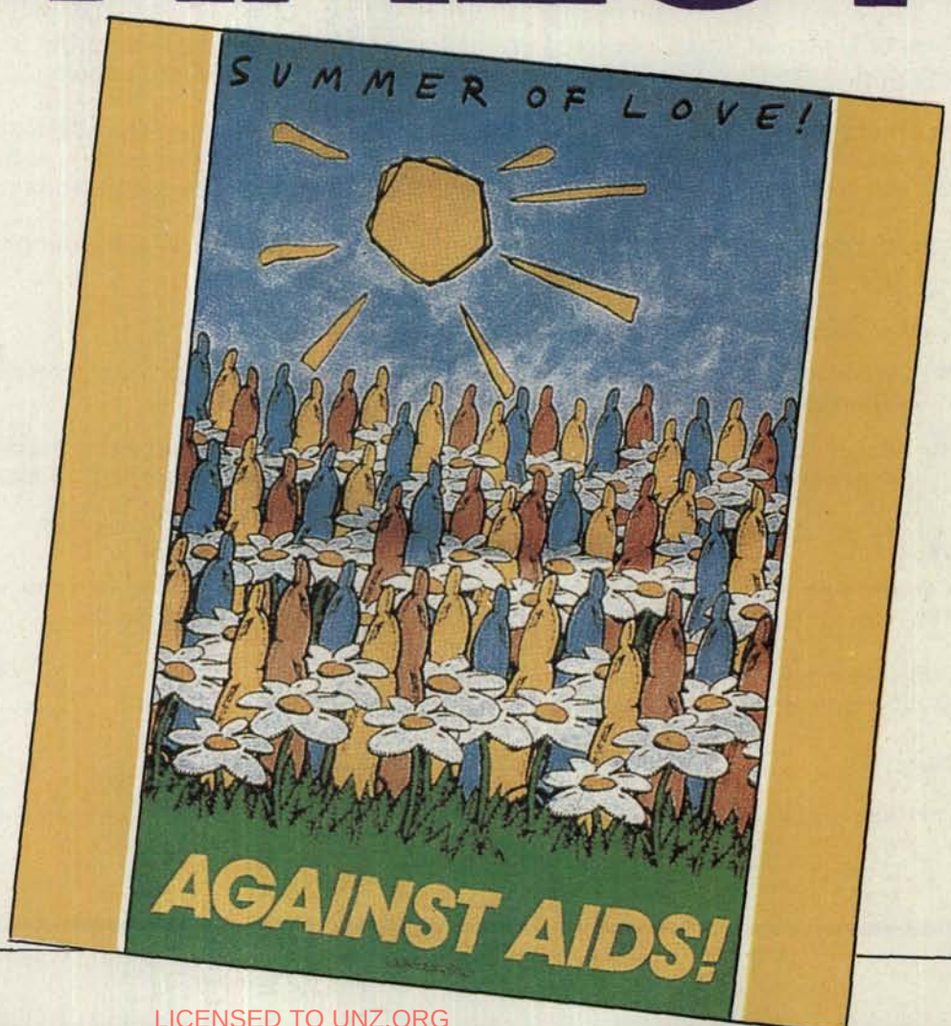

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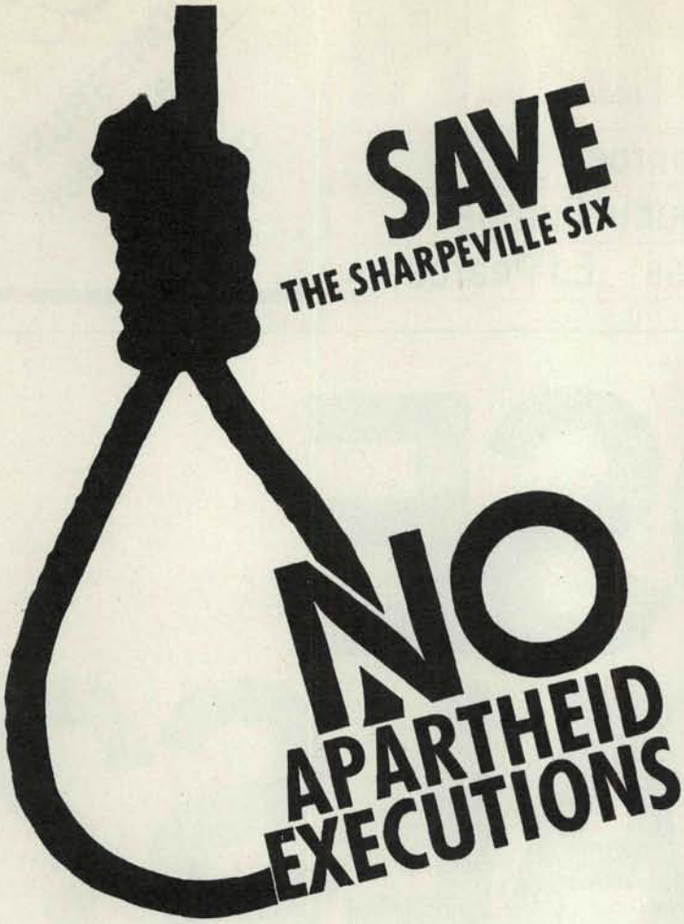

Six residents of Sharpeville, South Arica, Mojalefa Sefatsa, Reid Mokoena, Oupa Diniso, Theresa Ramashamola, Duma Khumalo and Francis Mokhesi – the 'Sharpeville Six' – are facing imminent execution in South Africa. This is despite the judgement in their appeal against the death sentences finding that there was no proof causally connecting the six with the events from which their sentences arose.

Lawyers for the six have submitted a Petition for Clemency to the State President – the last chance for a reprieve.

The appalling injustice of the Appeal Court decision, reinforcing the glaring lack of evidence implicating the accused in the original case has evoked widespread condemnation both within South Africa and internationally.

From South Africa has come a renewed Appeal, addressed to Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, President of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, from twelve democratic organisations in the country calling for action to do 'everything legally possible to save the lives of these young South Africans'. These organisations are the *South African Council of Churches (SACC), the South African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC), Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), United Democratic Front (UDF), Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU), South African Youth Congress (SAYCO), World Council of Peace and Religion (WCPR), National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADEL), Lawyers for Human Rights, Black Sash and the Call of Islam.*

Now only urgent pressure on the Pretoria regime can save the lives of the Sharpeville Six and we must respond to this united call of the representatives of the South African people.

In Britain the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Hume and the General Secretary of the TUC are among the thousands of individuals and organisations who have already joined the call for the saving of the lives of the Six and all those currently on death row in South Africa for their alleged actions in resisting apartheid.

Internationally the United Nations Security Council and the EEC are among those who have also echoed this appeal which Britain has supported.

Satis is appealing for all individuals and organisations to:

- **Write to the British Prime Minister urging her to make a personal intervention for clemency for the Sharpeville Six.**
- **Support the 'Save the Six' protests at the South African Embassy, Trafalgar Square, London WC2, every Wednesday – 24 February, 2 March, 9 March (women only), 16 March, 6-7pm.**

SATIS (Southern Africa the Imprisoned Society)

I/We would like to support the SATIS campaign to Save the Sharpeville Six.

Please send us more information.
My/Our donation to the Campaign is £10_____ £5_____ other £_____

Name.....

Address.....

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NEW STATESMAN

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NEXT WEEK

What's going on in NATO; *plus* Melissa Benn talks to Shere Hite about why men are atrocious lovers; Ian Mather on the popular mood in Afghanistan

Petit Gaullism

FOR THREE summits now the presidents, prime ministers and chancellors of the European Community, and all their assorted ministers and minions, have haggled over the grocers' bills. The media of the world have solemnly reported their deliberations, in the coarsest detail, and here at least the major opposition party has been puffing itself up into an unconvincing caricature of the leading lady in the whole drama, Mrs Thatcher herself.

All right. The Common Agriculture Policy is a monstrosity which damages not only the economies and environment of western Europe, but the economic balance of the world. It has to be reformed and, by and large, it will now be reformed. Only by Mrs Thatcher's own strident standards could the settlement be represented as a sell out; but that has been the petit-Gaullist response of the Labour Party's leaders.

Mrs Thatcher proclaims that the CAP swallows up two thirds of the EC budget. But that budget itself "swallows up" a mere one per cent of total government spending by EC member states. More important, it represents a tiny fraction of the huge cost of keeping some 20 million people out of work in the twelve countries. Surely a political party which prides itself on a commitment to put people back to work should seize hold of dramatic contrasts of this kind?

The fact is that the European summits have been a distraction from the two major issues which face Europe. First, the Community's produce mountains are dwarfed by the broader macro-economic and social consequences of high unemployment, fitful growth and, probably, an impending recession. And yet in Brussels Neil Kinnock played Little Sir Echo to Mrs Thatcher's "chauvinism" by ruling out increases in social and regional expenditure in advance of CAP reform.

By 1992, the "internal market" in Europe will be a fact of life. On pages 18-19, John Lloyd and John Palmer discuss the implications of this major development for the centre and left in Britain. (Palmer is also a participant in a Socialist Society debate on the future of Europe this weekend at the LSE.) Plainly, all those who want social justice to play a role in the way this change takes place—and who value the local and regional contributions which can be made to economic recovery and environmental protection in Europe—must begin now collectively to argue their case.

Secondly, the governments of western Europe are frantically reconsidering the defence of Europe in the aftermath of Reykjavik and the INF treaty. They now doubt the commitment of the United States to NATO and, with the advent of Gorbachev, fear the spectre of de-nuclearisation. Mrs Thatcher has publicly set her face against any further negotiation away of nuclear arms, and she has indeed been back to Brussels this week to press the case for "modernising" (i.e., restocking, see *NS* 29 January) Europe's short-range nuclear weaponry.

There are three possible scenarios. West Germany, still the most likely battleground for any "flexible" use of nuclear weapons, would like to explore a post-Yalta political settlement between east and west. France and Britain, cautiously exploring a nuclear deal, differ over what the US will deliver, but both see western Europe as a nuclear power, either as a second pillar of a recast Atlantic Alliance or as a third-world power in its own right.

There is not yet a grand European design, but governments and political elites are hard at work thinking the options through. The West European Union is being reinvigorated as a platform for collective security through nuclear deterrence.

At such a time, for the major opposition party in Britain to be on the brink of a possible leadership election in which withdrawal from the Community would be a serious issue is mind-boggling. For or against Europe is not the question. It is rather what kind of Europe we want. The Labour Party's leaders, and those of the Alliance, have long since made up their minds on the first point. There's not much sign that they've seriously addressed the second — or we surely would have been given a principled alternative to Mrs Thatcher's preoccupations last weekend.

Additionally, there's a danger that Labour's policy review will be used as a damage-limitation exercise to put the tortured debate on defence policy on ice. That would be a strategic blunder worthy of the first world war generals whom Neil Kinnock conjured up from the dead to mock Arthur Scargill during the miners' strike.

Ordinary people in western Europe welcomed the two superpower summits and the INF treaty; privately, their governments have not, though they've been obliged to put a good face on it publicly. Ordinary people look forward to removing the shadow of nuclear warfare entirely from the continent. Their governments are determined to hang onto the nuclear deterrent and, indeed, to make up for what was lost in Washington.

Demands for a nuclear-free and pluralist Europe have a real populist resonance. Now is the time to argue for disarmament—nuclear and conventional—within a far more generous vision of the future than Mrs Thatcher has in her closed mind. The opposition parties have missed three opportunities. They should not miss the fourth. □

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DIARY

As we all know, the Red Cross is thoroughly neutral in matters of international controversy. This was also the understanding of members of the organisation's London branch who attended a "training weekend" in Hertfordshire a couple of weeks ago. But after listening to an address by Oscar Davis, head of the Red Cross's International Aid Department, some weren't so sure.

Davis told his audience that they shouldn't believe everything they read in the papers about apartheid. The problem arose because black people from the country came into towns, saw how white people lived and became greedy. That, he explained, was why it was necessary to control black people's movements. He appended an interesting thought: black countries which refused to have anything to do with South Africa because it was white were guilty of — wait for it — racism.

Turning to South Africa's neighbours, Davis said that in Mozambique socialism had been imposed on people who couldn't relate to it. Mozambique's economic chaos was caused not by war or tribal differences but by socialism.

Then came a question from the floor: why was the infant mortality rate for blacks in South Africa so much higher than for whites? Davis declined to answer. Why? Because, he announced loftily, he couldn't discuss politics.

I tried contacting Oscar Davis this week to hear some more of his fascinating opinions, but was told that he was abroad. In South Africa.

○

Weddings are often more miserable ceremonies than funerals. When, some years ago, I announced my intention of being married in a register office, I had a furious early-morning phone call from a relation who wanted to know how I was going to explain my conduct to God on the Day of Judgment. So I welcome a booklet published on Valentine's Day by the British Humanist Association, *To Love and to Cherish: A Guide to Non-Religious Wedding Ceremonies* (£2.99 from BHA, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8 5PG). It assumes, I'm sorry to see, that lovers are exclusively heterosexual. And its suggested music for ceremonies — including "You'll Never Walk Alone" and "Tea for Two" — is eccentric. But the central message is sound enough: that many thoughtful people want to "declare publicly their love for each other and their aspirations for the future" in a way that neither church nor register office (nor any branch of the State, for that matter) can satisfy. The left tends to neglect rites of passage, as though love and death are too embarrassing or too unimportant to be noticed. They aren't.

○

Is the *Sun* going soft? Last week it ran a full-page editorial about homosexuals and actually called them gays. True, the item was headed "When the gays have to shut up". True, too, it made a preposterous connection between the Synod's debate on homosexuality and the murder of Stuart Gough, the Worcestershire newsboy. But then it did concede that "no one, in reason, can possibly blame the homosexual community for what happened to Stuart Gough, any more than a reasonable woman would blame all heterosexual men for an act of rape or murder". It accepted that how homosexuals behave in private "is their own affair". Most amazingly, two days later it carried a long letter from a gay man in Ealing (a social worker, to boot!) who denounced the paper's anti-homosexual attitude with great force and eloquence. The letter was printed prominently across much of page 2.

Can this be the paper that pioneered the use of "poof" and "queer" on news pages? The paper which reported Elton John's wedding under the headline "Good on yer, poofter"? There was only one man to ask — the *Sun*'s notorious chief leader-writer, Ron Spark, who is believed to wear barbed wire next to the skin. "Basically," he told me matter-of-factly, "we wish to be fair to all groups." Come again? "We were very concerned not to give people a chance to say we were queer-bashing. We wish to be fair."

Ha bloody ha. More likely, this is the first tangible proof that even the mega-sleaze merchants have begun to panic at the widening support for a Right of Reply. Crack open the bubbly, dance a jig and say not the struggle naught availeth.

○

Not *all* the Murdoch papers have yet come round to the idea of behaving properly, of course, just as not *all* pigs are yet flying: porcine aviation is a slow business. Take the main "news" story on the front of last Thursday's *Times* which claimed that private firms were ready to challenge the Post Office's monopoly on delivering letters. "Mr Alan Jones, managing director of TNT, the transport company, said he was eager to see the Post Office monopoly broken and called on Mrs Thatcher to end it permanently," it reported. "He said his firm already offered a cheaper and more efficient overseas service than its public sector counterpart." By some oversight, in all this puffery *The Times* failed to mention that TNT is the firm which delivers the Murdoch papers and is run by Murdoch's close business partner Sir Peter Abeles. There was a similar coincidence a couple of months ago, when TNT said that its business mail service would be cheaper than the Royal Mail's Datapost. Most newspapers pointed out that this was highly misleading. But two papers conspiculously took most of TNT's claims at face value — *The Times* and *Today*. And guess who owns *them*?

○

Before (thankfully) leaving Wapping, I must say I liked the *Sunday Times*'s cheek in running Norman Stone's reluctant *j'accuse* in which he said he could no longer give Kurt Waldheim the benefit of the doubt because the man was now a proven liar. In the same issue, the *Sunday Times* announced with huge pride that it had hired as its special correspondent (no doubt at a decent fee) another man who clung to his presidency after he had been exposed as a liar, a man who resigned only when impeachment was staring him in the face — Richard Nixon. Denounce corrupt politicians on one page and employ them on another: what could be fairer?

○

A historic moment: at 1.30pm precisely next Tuesday (Eastern Standard Time) Lady Olga Maitland will be shown into the Oval Office and will entwine her exquisitely manicured digits with the grizzled paw of President Reagan. "It's going to be a one-on-one meeting," she tells me excitedly, "it's just the two of us. We *are* the conversation." She thinks it will last for 20 minutes, which I suspect will be mentally taxing for both parties.

Reagan himself requested the interview. "I think he wants to hear my views on countering the peace movement," she gurgles. She will take the opportunity to let him know that the British aristocracy is standing shoulder-to-shoulder with him. "I just feel this anti-Americanism which just keeps going on and on is something which really has to be sort of tackled." Uh huh. And what about the INF treaty? She's "all for it", but wants no further progress. "We've now cleared the cupboard enough of nuclear weapons for the time being. I think we've pretty well reached the lowest possible level [of nuclear weapons]. I don't want it to go any further. I don't want to see a nuclear-free Europe." But wouldn't a nuclear-free Europe be a logical eventual conclusion to INF, START and so on? She puts on her grandest Lady Bracknell voice: "Over my dead body." Precisely.

Francis Wheen

ROGER WODDIS

Anglican Beatitudes

Mrs Thatcher, in private talks with the Archbishop of Canterbury and other senior Church of England bishops, urged them to give a lead in raising 'declining standards of personal morality'

AND spurning the multitudes, she went into private session with her leading prelates:

And she opened her mouth, and taught them, saying,

Blessed are the rich in pocket: for theirs is the freedom of choice.

Blessed are they that screw the poor: for they shall be rewarded.

Blessed are they that pervert the course of justice in the name of national security: for they shall get away with murder.

Blessed are they which do thirst on the Lord's Day: for they shall benefit the brewers.

Blessed are they that kneel to the powerful: for they shall be called my party at prayer.

Blessed are the seekers after perfection: for they shall see Me.

Blessed are the children that die before their time: for they shall save bedspace.

Blessed are the old that die of hypothermia: for they shall save the state money.

Blessed are they which talk of moral values while ripping off the helpless: for theirs is the kingdom of cant.

Let us prey.

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Bad marks for newspaper group

THE EDITORS of 14 small weekly newspapers in mid-Glamorgan, Wales, had recently taken to giving their reporters little tests: for appearance, telephone manner and the like. Senior journalists of over 20 years standing were being put through hoops normally reserved for juniors and given a mark out of 100.

Then on 11 February Celtic Newspaper Group issued their employees with individual contracts stipulating that all pay increases would be determined for each employee by the editor and no union would negotiate on their behalf. Previous job conditions — expenses, maternity leave and so on have been scrapped by the company, including a new technology agreement guaranteeing breaks away from the screen, eye tests and protection for pregnant women.

Celtic Newspapers' management have insisted that the changes are due to the local situation. They are not, however, unique to the *Pontypridd Observer* and the *Merthyr Express*.

Celtic is owned by Thomson Regional Newspapers, part of the International Thomson Organisation Ltd, a Canadian-owned multi-national. In 1985 it made £123 million profit and in 1986, £60.8 million. The company stresses that the drop was due to the fall in oil prices (North Sea oil being one of their main profit centres) and that in the same period profits from "information and publishing" in Britain rose from £13 million to £27 million.

As well as the Welsh group, TRN owns some ten titles in Britain, including the prestigious *Scotsman, Western Mail* (in Cardiff) and *Belfast Telegraph*. Over the last year TRN has embarked on what Ian Campbell, deputy Father of the Chapel on the *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, called "systematic deunionisation".

A general pattern has emerged, which differs only slightly according to the quirks of different editors. First, all staff promotions to positions of responsibility — news editor, chief sub-editor and so on — have been conditional on their signing a new contract, outside the normal National Union of Journalists' house agreement, guaranteeing, amongst other things, "continuous production" — in other words, a no-strike agreement. Pay increases would also be a matter for the editor, with no union involvement. Later, all higher echelons of staff are put under pressure to sign the same agreement: most have conceded, but a few have insisted on adding "signed under duress".

Managements then gave the union notice that the house agreements would not be renewed; in cases where chapels tried to invoke the normal disputes procedure, management refused to enter into it. They went on to offer a £5 or £6 a week pay rise on condition journalists signed new contracts, similar to the Celtic Newspapers one, though for the most part less frank about refusing to negotiate with the union. On top of the across-the board rise, merit money would be paid on performance. So far only Celtic has introduced formal appraisals; the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph* in Blackburn has opted for a "Reporter of the Quarter" scheme, with a £50 prize. All chapels have so far resisted the contracts: 90 out of 120 journalists on the *Western Mail and South Wales Echo* put their names to a blanket refusal.

Throughout the negotiations, managements have insisted that the initiative is a local one: "this is very much local market-led and entirely off our own bat", Harry Roulston, editor of the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* said, after sighing deeply when I asked what was going on. The national NUJ, however, has obtained documents which show that orders were issued from TRN's headquarters in Hannay House, Watford, from the offices of Roger Nicholson, managing director, and Steve Addley, personnel controller. Nobody at TRN headquarters was available for comment. But when I asked Jeremy Shelton, personnel manager at the *Western Mail* about the local situation he replied: "I expect you've heard that it's all being orchestrated from Hannay House, so you'd better get on to them.'

One editor who would talk only if not named — "because I'm part of a large organisation and there are politics involved, so I have to be careful" — said that there was a "major cultural change" afoot in TRN local papers: "Those prepared to do extra will get increases, others won't. That's the way that TRN is going." He confirmed that the company was particularly keen to crack the NUJ now that the print unions had been broken, new technology brought in and journalists have their hands on the keyboards. The company is afraid, in other words, that journalists now have the power to stop production in a way they never did when it was controlled by print unions.

Local union officials are amazed by TRN's juggernaut approach: "It's not as if we're a militant or bolshie bunch", said Jayne Isaac, MOC at Celtic. "They've lost a huge amount of goodwill and co-operation", said Susan Lord in Blackburn. One of their most bitter resentments is that management no longer cares about the quality of the product: "They have cut staffing levels and are artificially depressing wages; they rely on our professional integrity to do a good job but don't care about the quality of the paper suffering", said Mike Clark, FOC at the *Evening Gazette* on Teeside.

TRN has always been at pains to present the image of papers rooted in the local community; there is generally little or no indication to be found in their papers that they are part of a multinational group. Similarly, they have always maintained that each "regional centre", as they are called, is independent. This goes some way to explaining their pretence that there are no orders from headquarters to gut the union.

Four years ago, Bruce B VanDusen, the former editor of the *Kokomo Tribune*, a daily in Indiana, USA, wrote a lengthy article for the American Newspaper Guild describing what happened when Thomson's took over his paper. Contact with staff working for other Thomson papers was strictly forbidden, and Thomson's name was not be mentioned in the paper. Unionisation of staff was pre-empted. A target was set to increase the average number of stories written by reporters from two a day to seven. As VanDusen pointed out, the only way to do this was by re-writing press releases and to stop reporting on anything controversial: "Thomson Newspaper Inc thus is producing newspeople whose focus is on productivity first, with quality a poorly defined second."

Jane Dibblin

Glorious opportunity for the Orange Order?

WHY IS A Labour council paying for celebrations which will be used as a focus for a display of Ulster Unionist strength, and as a chance for British fascists and loyalist extremists to forge even closer links? That's the question being asked by Labour Party supporters and anti-fascists in Devon.

Exeter City Council, run by a Labour/Liberal coalition, is paying £60,000 for a programme of events from July onwards to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the landing in Devon of William the Orange and the advent of the "Glorious Revolution", which marked the end of absolute monarchy and beginnings of parliamentary sovereignty. The events in themselves are hardly controversial — a flower festival, pageants, church services and a specially-commissioned play.

But the celebrations are being used by the Orange Order, one of the corner-stones of Protestant supremacy in Northern Ireland, to stage its own events. The Imperial Orange Council of the World will be holding its triennial conference in September in Brixham (the site of William's landing) which will attract loyalists from all over the English-speaking world, including South Africa. The Grand Orange Lodge of England will be holding its own annual convention in Exeter the same month. A major march — a crucial focal point of Orange political activity since the Order's foundation in 1795 — is also planned, although details are being kept secret.

More worrying, the National Front has its own plans to use the anniversary. The NF's south-west organiser has promised to bring supporters from all over the country to participate in the

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celebrations. The NF, flagging on the British mainland, is eager to help those fighting what it sees as the "Nationalist Revolution" in Northern Ireland.

Opponents of the city council's plans have criticised the decision to celebrate the tercentenary as at best "insensitive" and "offensive". Neil Todd of Exeter Anti-Fascist Action (and himself a Labour Party member) accuses the council of "glorifying the living symbol of Protestant supremacy". He argues that whatever the historical significance of 1688, the meaning today of William of Orange and 1688 is inseparable from the Orange Order and the Protestant supremacy for which it stands. In the current political climate, he says, it is inconceivable that the events will not be used as a focus for opposition to the Anglo-Irish agreement.

Todd and Anti-Fascist Action nationally also take the National Front threat very seriously. They point out that the Front was involved in the trouble which accompanied the 1986 "British Friends of Ulster" march held in the Bridgewater constituency of the Northern Ireland secretary, Tom King.

Such claims have little impact on the Labour leader of the city council, Chester Long, who argues that the council is commemorating events of constitutional significance. He dismisses critics as, variously, "students", "five stupid bastards" and the "National Association of Headbangers", flatly rejecting any suggestion of a connection between the celebration of the tercentenary and the current situation in Northern Ireland.

Paul Gordon

Kilroy's right turn

VIRAJ MENDIS is a refugee from Sri Lanka who has sought sanctuary in a Manchester church. The Home Office regards him as an illegal immigrant and wants to deport him. His fight against expulsion is based on his claim that if he were to return he would face the gravest danger. This is not a solitary cry — Amnesty International, the British Council of Churches, and the Labour Party accept that he is likely to be persecuted in Sri Lanka. Dr Robert Bradnock, chair of the Liberal Party Foreign Affairs committee, visited Sri Lanka in August 1987, and met officials close to President Jayewardene who expressed the cryptic opinion that "it would be highly dangerous for Mr Mendis to be returned . . . particularly in view of the publicity that his case has had in Britain and Sri Lanka."

Robert Kilroy-Silk, TV chat-show host and former Labour MP, recently filmed Viraj Mendis in his church sanctuary. He then wrote about the case in his column in *Police Review*, expressing opinions far removed from those of the PLP Civil Liberties Group which he chaired only four years ago. Kilroy-Silk called for the "illegal immigrant" to be deported, and accused the churchman involved in the case of not showing "any real awareness of how stupid and dangerous was the game that they were playing".

This is not what Mendis expected when he agreed to meet Kilroy-Silk; he was hoping, at the very least, for an impartial review of his case. But Kilroy-Silk's article called on James Anderton, Manchester's controversial chief constable, to breach Mendis's sanctuary. He even quoted a Manchester councillor, Anne Carroll, who asked during the TV programme how Mendis could be in danger in Sri Lanka when he was not even known there — a point with which President Jayewardene's officials appear not to agree.

It's a far cry from the days when the dashing young Labour MP was the scourge of opponents of liberty. Or, as one of his former colleagues in the civil liberties lobby remarked last week, with commendable restraint: "Bob's politics have shifted a bit."

Aman Coonar

Top gun?

"IT IS NOT the Tory party, but the Labour party in office, that has made the really tough decisions on Britain's defence. Perhaps not all of us will agree on the merits of those decisions, but the Labour party in power made the decisions that it had to make in the national interest, and it would be wrong to suggest otherwise. I remind Conservative Members that it was the Labour party in power that decided to enter NATO. It was the Labour party in power that gave a commitment to European defence. It was the Labour party in power that decided to re-arm at the time of Korea and to support the United Nations' forces there — something which the Secretary of State knows about. It was the Labour party in power that decided to develop an independent nuclear weapon strategy. Contrary to the propaganda and lies of the Government, the next Labour Government will make the tough decisions necessary for the proper defence of this country."

— Labour front bencher ALLAN ROGERS, speaking in a debate on the RAF last week

Free market: prison of the poor

IF YOU'VE HAD enough of people claiming the right wing's intellectual ascendancy, come to the *New Statesman*/London School of Economics debate to hear Roy Hattersley, deputy leader of the Labour Party and co-author of its *Aims and Values* draft statement, pitted against Kenneth Minogue, Professor of Government at the LSE and presenter of Channel Four's free-market *New Enlightenment* programme two years ago.

On 1 March they will debate the motion "The free market is the prison of the poor" at 7.30pm at the LSE, Houghton Street, London WC2. Hattersley will be supported by John Lloyd, recent editor of the *NS*, and Minogue by Bruce Anderson, assistant editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*.

The debate is organised in conjunction with the LSE students' union (which has just stripped Health Secretary John Moore of his honorary studentship) to celebrate this, the *New Statesman*'s 75th anniversary year.

Information from 01-405 7686 ext. 2878. ●

1968 supplement

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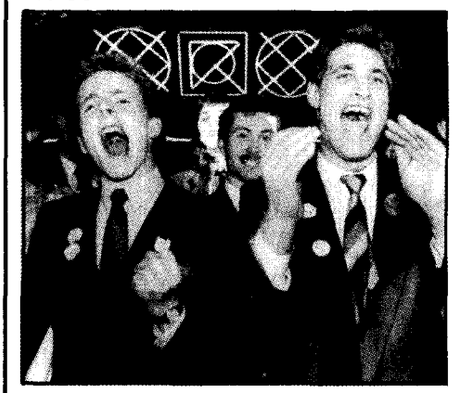

It's so nice to see people enjoying themselves isn't it? These jolly chaps are Young Conservatives bent on having a good time at the YC Conference, at the Roxy disco on Eastbourne Pier. What are they singing, thinking (thinking?), shouting, please. Tell us on a post card to be in by Monday 29 February. Ten-pound book token for the winner.

No 53: winner

Middle lifeguard to Princess Di: "Please accept this little phallic symbol, from all of us." (*Katie Mallet, Canvey Island.*) Runner up: Lifeguard: "And you're very big down under, too, madam." (*Peter Barnes, Milton Keynes.*)

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Thatcher 0, EEC 11

SO MRS THATCHER can be beaten after all. Last weekend eleven EEC heads of government achieved in Brussels what by their own mythology was the impossible — they browbeat the "Dame de Fer" into accepting that she could not have all she wanted all of the time.

It was a red-eyed, worn down, uncharacteristically unconvincing Margaret Thatcher who emerged in the early hours of last Saturday morning to try and sell what was by her own standards a humiliating climbdown. And that was the point which was largely missed by those of her political opponents who were quick to accuse her of selling out. Only by the standards of a Mrs Thatcher for whom compromise is a dirty word can settling for the best deal one can get be construed as a defeat.

In fact, the deal is far from bad for Britain. There are now going to be cash limits for the first time on the Common Agricultural policy. The EEC is legally bound from now on to hold spending down so that the CAP takes a declining share of EEC spending. The Commission is required to take immediate action to stop spending exceeding the 74 per cent growth guideline, which itself was a long way short of the 100 per cent growth the French and Germans originally wanted. The stabilisers to control individual product regimes will mean quite severe price penalties on farmers. And stabilisers work. Those already introduced for beef and dairy products are already eating into the beef and butter mountains.

Mrs Thatcher could have hung on until Hanover and would probably have lost everything. The Germans would have simply redrawn the propósals to suit themselves. Even before Brussels, she had already lost her grip on the negotiations.

George Robertson, Labour's Foreign Affairs spokesman, missed the point when he accused the Prime Minister of having surrendered to the French and German farm lobbies. While Mrs Thatcher was fighting tooth and nail against Brussels efforts to give Britain more money, on the grounds that it would have been knocked off the rebate, Kinnock has been trying to out-Thatcher Thatcher and upsetting his allies in the Spanish and Greek Socialist parties who are less fussy about taking EEC cash.

Kinnock himself recognised on a recent visit to Brussels that the EEC has for far too long been the theatre for Mrs Thatcher to bolster her own machismo. She has deliberately whipped up public concern at home over Common Market profligacy. Why also would the Whitehall propaganda machine have spent the previous week churning out statistics galore about the cost of the CAP? She was hoist with her own petard.

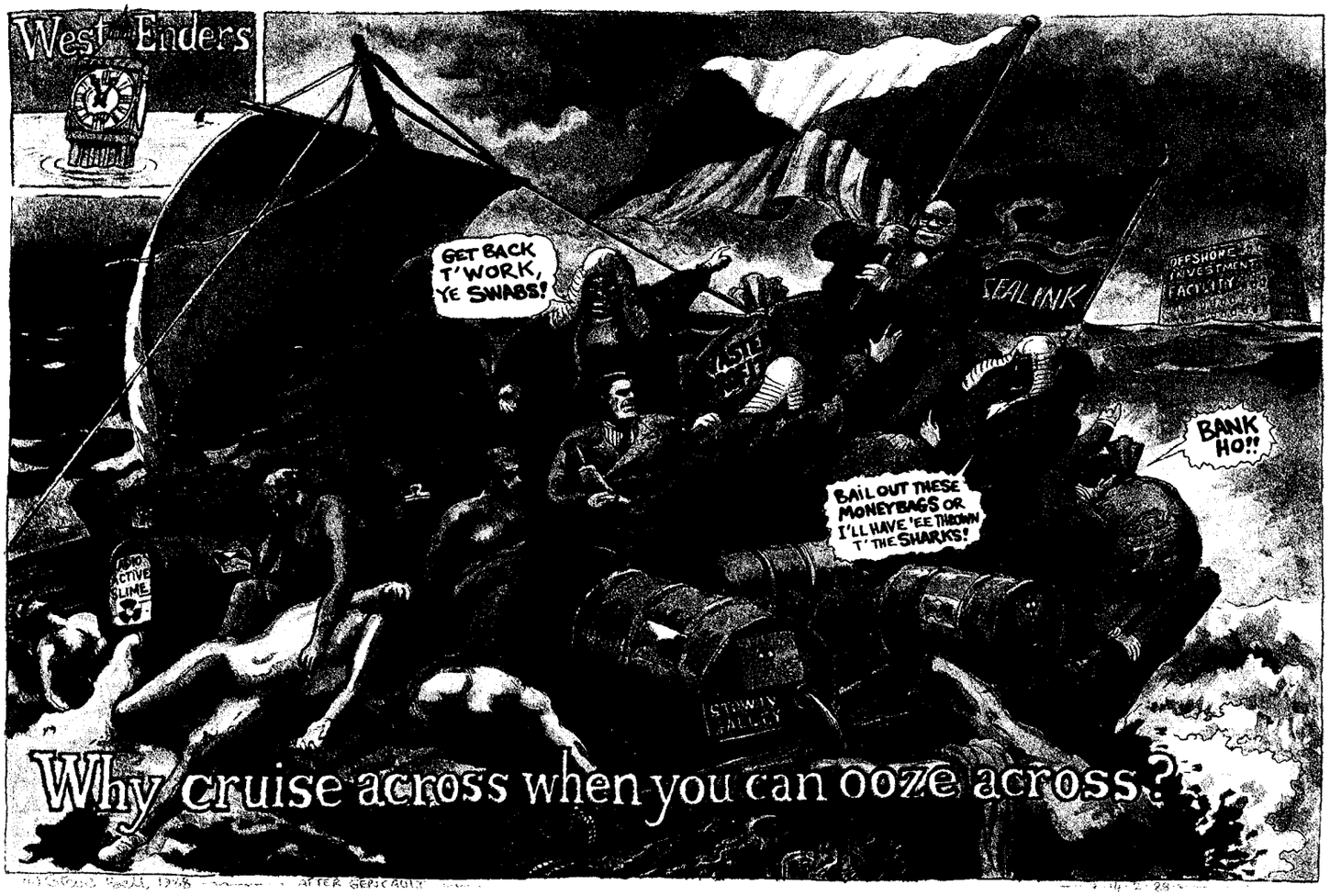
Since Mrs Thatcher came on the summit scene nine years ago, an extraordinary amount of effort has been expended in petty rowing about money. The priority for the Bonn Presidency is to press on with the plans to weld Europe's competing national economies into a single internal market able to mobilise the buying power of its population to support world-beating industries.

Mrs Thatcher's vision of the internal market is a kind of European free trade zone, allowing the City free rein and further undermining any effort to control capital flows for the greater good.

Other European leaders have a very different view. They believe the regulatory functions at present fulfilled by the nation state are going to have to be taken over gradually by the European institutions. On this issue Mrs Thatcher has already lost ground. First, she has had to accept a technology policy. Second, and as a result of last weekend's agreement, she has also conceded that the EEC should be equipped with the resources for a meaningful regional policy to help the backward regions of Southern Europe and the declining industrial regions of Britain modernise to meet the tough competition the internal market liberalisation will unleash.

And bitter battles lie ahead on broader economic issues: on stronger European monetary cooperation, a coordinated reflationary economic policy, and harmonisation of certain social standards. Mrs Thatcher has set her face against all of these developments. It remains to be seen whether she will prove tougher on these issues than she appeared last weekend.

Andrew Garfield


West Enders
GET BACK T'WORK, YE SWABS!
SEALINK
OFFSHORE INVESTMENT FACILITY
BANK HO!!
BAIL OUT THESE MONEYBAGS OR I'LL HAVE 'EE THROWN T' THE SHARKS!
Why cruise across when you can ooze across?

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Bad news for Mr and Ms Wright

NATURALLY THE *Guardian* and *Observer* are pleased to have won two *Spycatcher* judgements in a row; and of course we share in their joy, however temporary it may prove to be. But it's hard to take seriously the haloes being erected over the three appeal court judges. (In particular, Sir John Donaldson's new role as a defender of the press is unconvincing: it's less than a year since he told off newspapers for criticising judges. He said it "threatened to undermine public confidence not only in the judiciary but in the rule of law.")

Far from having dealt a body blow to government censorship, their Lordships were about as parsimonious as could be with press freedom. The only reason that they refused to grant the government its injunction was on the common sense ground that the information had already been made public — "lamentable though the stipulation might be". This didn't change the Crown's right to confidentiality: it simply meant that an injunction was no longer an appropriate remedy. In principle, the Crown's interest in maintaining secrecy still "wholly overwhelmed" the public interest in publication.

What happens next time a former MI5 employee wants to blow the whistle on official wrongdoing? Well, implied Donaldson, it was pretty unlikely, given the "extensive control mechanisms" that existed, that such wrongdoing would have gone undetected; but, he said, if the papers seriously concluded that parliamentary control had broken down, they had a right and duty to make the allegation public, but only the allegation not the evidence on which it is based.

At which point we can all give a hollow laugh. Judging by recent form, the government will do all it can to stop anyone giving even the *name* of the former MI5 officer, and high court judges will oblige by giving temporary — though long lasting — injunctions to that effect. Newspapers will end up being able to print the less than earthshattering story: "MI5 agent makes allegation".

So the future of Mr and Ms Wright will have to go through the hoops all over again: emigrate for good — preferably to a country with which we have no extradition agreement — and publish in the United States. The government will get its injunction stopping newspapers reprinting the allegations. A few papers will deliberately break the injunction; people will privately import copies of the book and gradually the secrecy of the allegations will be lost. *Only then,* will the injunction be lifted.

And the judgement is bad news for anyone pinning their hopes on a bill of rights, or hoping to get the European Convention on Human Rights incorporated into British law. Donaldson explicitly took account of article 10 of the Convention, which guarantees freedom of expression. But, he said, according to domestic law, citizens already have the right to do anything they like, unless restrained by the common law or by statute. Article 10 is therefore effectively *already in* British law, he said. By the same reasoning, of course, the *whole* convention is already there. So that's all right.

Jolyon Jenkins

POLITICAL SKETCH

95 per cent

Edward Pearce

THE BEAUTY of "Europe", as the fans like to call the West Elban Agricultural Protection Treaty, is that nobody can understand it. More precisely, that tiny fraction who do comprehend the spun-sugar intricacies of rebates, green currencies, crop regimes and subsidies by almost any other name, are all on the winning side of the scam. The losers, most of us, are involved remotely, as taxpayers and buyers of expensive lamb chops, and thus lose remotely. Accordingly our feelings lack edge. The ayes, all half a per cent of rural rippers-off, have it.

Mrs Thatcher's statement to the Commons on her return from Brussels was appropriately overfoliated. But the broad Thatcher defence is that whatever she may have conceded now is justifiable in terms of the "stabilisers" built into the system in return for the newly jacked-up payments. It was one of those days on which she did her battling Maggie bit and Dennis Skinner contributed his share — to the Conservative cause.

On balance the Prime Minister, despite an advantage provided by whoever forgot to inform opponents by depositing her statement in the library, was on the defensive. But it was hard to feel that Labour fully deployed its guns. There was much to-ing and fro-ing about the contents of newspapers. Roy Hattersley lingered long on the *Daily Telegraph*'s "British retreat on several fronts", while Mrs Thatcher reached for the left-wing *Libération* and for *Le Figaro,* which had celebrated the "knowing smiles" of the British negotiating team on their returning plane. I incline to the view that when a piece of information is complex and sophisticated to the point of not being information, one looks first to find out who is pleased about it. And the thought occurs that whatever the conflicting views of *Figaro* and the *Telegraph*, quietly purring leaders will be composed at the Market Blandings *Courier* and *Argus*.

There will be no stricken farmers this time or next, and something Mrs Thatcher let slip may explain why. Arguing against Nick Budgen's case for an independent, roll-your-own subsidy, she observed that it would cost as much or more to pay farmers equivalently in deficiency payments. In other words the protection of the farmer, not from bread-line grief, but at something like the current second Jaguar level, is policy. A departure from it would in the favourite cliché of illogic, be "unacceptable".

Stuart Bell, expressing the new reasonableness, asked the Prime Minister to accept that Labour welcomed "reasonably prosperous farmers", but wondered why she was not as generous to British nurses as to foreign farmers. This produced a classic Thatcher voice — swoop into bold italics. "But we *are very* generous **indeed** to British nurses."

The key questioning came from Peter Shore who has a long record of being bleakly right about Europe in the days when it was all glitz and uplift and before we became wholly preoccupied with the bribing of peasant voters and their allies in the gentry. Was it not a sad day for the Prime Minister? Had there not been an increase in payments, not of 25 per cent but 45 per cent and would this new Community tax be larger in four years' time or smaller? It is a very important question and Mrs Thatcher did not answer it.

IT IS ALL very odd. According to sources close to the lobby, Mr Bernard Ingham spent short curt sessions explaining to the accredited press in Brussels that the deals being put on the table were quite hopeless, and in preparing everyone for the imminent collapse of talks. Suddenly the deal is on and Mrs Thatcher is telling the Commons on Monday that "we obtained 95 per cent of what we set out to get". Even by the normal standards of rhetoric and optimism this is a flying leap into empty space. Mrs Thatcher rests her case, upon stabilisers, but will they work? Will they even be allowed to function?

As Teddy Taylor put it, the EEC had a splendid record for getting out of commitments, the operation of the ten month metric year when it had run out of funds being only the most spectacular. The ceiling on "own resources", he pointed out, had been lifted from 1.4 per cent of VAT receipts to a new calculation which amounts to about 2 per cent. Alas, I have been in the gallery long enough to remember the lamentations which greeted the increase from 1 to 1.4 per cent!

One wonders quite how Labour is going to handle what is surely a straight donation to its vote, if handled properly. The wretched Dennis Skinner lurched around with a point of order which involved him getting onto the record that it was "Labour Party policy to gerrout of the Common Market".

However it is one thing to avoid being identified as total abandoners of the Eurothing, which would be bad tactics and lend itself to a lot of newspaper froth, it is quite another to miss the opportunity of sticking to the Common Agricultural Policy and beating it to a pulp!

"Europe" is not Europe. The drums and fanfares have fallen away to accomodate an economic camel. It is a camel in every sense, in that it passes easily through the eye of a needle at every beer and sandwiches session in the schlossen, chateaux and palazzi of Western Europe, and in having been designed by the proverbial committee setting out to draft a model for a horse. As Mrs Thatcher perches with ever less credible authority on this wayward beast, the opportunities for cool, factual opposition sharp-shooting are unlimited. Of course the buffoon Skinner and his gerrout-of-Europe noisemaking should be ignored. But *pas assez de zèle* is as great a fault as too much.

The ambitious talk which sees the deal as the means to a freer market in industrial goods and to putting farm wrangles behind us ignores the fact that the fundamental absurdity of protectionist agriculture has been the bloodstream of "Europe" for 20 years and has just received, for all the vision-patter, yet another hike in its receipts. Mrs Thatcher was ever an enemy of subsidy, yet subsidy for the agrarian extractionists is the only part of the community which goes beyond avowal and pious aspiration. If this is a triumph why does it have two humps? □

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BEN PIMLOTT

Labour should step out of its charmed circle and *really* listen

ACCORDING TO A survey published in the *Independent*, a large number of Labour MPs are sceptical, if not downright cynical, both about the recently launched Labour Listens campaign and about the much-vaunted policy review. Is such an attitude healthy? Is it helpful? Is it realistic? The answer to those questions is of considerable importance, if Labour is ever to catch the fall-out when the Tory vote begins to crumble.

There is the issue of motive. At present, both the campaign and the review are being identified not just as a quest for greater popularity, but also as a frantic grab for popularity at any price. Both are being seen as part of the leadership's age-old crab dance to the right. Hence the ideologically correct position has been to treat both exercises with a large pinch of salt. Irons are already being heated, ready to brand whatever product may yet emerge with a single mark: "sell-out".

Yet this is odd. If, instead of offering to review and listen, the NEC had declared "no change", if the Party Executive and Shadow Cabinet had declared that policy was a matter only for certified socialists, and that any other influence might be contaminating and should be excluded, would that have been better?

Close to any definition of socialism is the belief that inspiration is derived from the people. True, there is the leninist theory of false consciousness, according to which the uneducated masses do not know their own real beliefs because they have been bribed, cajoled, brainwashed by capitalism into holding false ones. Adherents of this theory have taken a dim view of public opinion, preferring their own. Few, however, of the critics of the listening campaign, linked to the review, have used this argument.

Why, then, should there be resistance? One reason, of course, is that some of the messages will be unpalatable. Indeed (and here the critics, even the leninists, have a point) if the Labour Party listened too closely and responded too slavishly to what it heard, it might cease to be a Labour Party at all. It would be easy enough to devise a lowest-common-denominator party that attempted to pander to every popular fashion or prejudice. But the programme of such a party would not be socialism. It may reasonably be objected that the Nazi Party in Germany was a listening party, and so are Mrs Thatcher's Tories.

An alternative objection — from those who have a bit more confidence in the capacity of Labour members and Labour Conferences to keep the faith — is that, while not taking the Party wildly off the rails, the process will nevertheless be used to bolster the process of trim: in short, the crab-walk. Do the public like nationalisation? Do they like unilateral nuclear disarmament? We all know in advance, from a thousand opinion polls, that they do not. So why bother to listen to them again, except to bolster the case for avoiding such commitments?

There is a third objection to Labour Listens, and its implications for the review. If Labour is not going to listen too attentively to the opinions of those with whom it fundamentally disagrees, who is it going to listen to? Its own supporters? If the latter (and, to judge from the Brighton launch, a high proportion of those attending "listening" functions are likely to be people who are at least prepared to give Labour the benefit of the doubt) then all Labour will hear is a cacophony of echoes. The Executive members who sat politely and attentively in Brighton may have appreciated the chance to take the weight off their feet. But it is not yet apparent that their views have shifted significantly as a result.

None of these objections can be dismissed. Neither should the leadership treat them as frivolous sniping. Unless they are met, not only MPs, but the bulk of party members — an even more suspicious bunch — will swiftly deposit their Labour Listens packs in the bin. At the same time, it would be equally stupid to dismiss out of hand the Party's initiatives in the direction of greater flexibility and openness. It ought surely to be possible for all the tendencies in the Party, left and right, up and down, in and out, to use the opportunity to encourage a desperately conservative and tradition-bound organisation to let in some fresh air.

> ***Labour Listens might be turned into Labour learns, Labour understands, and finally — even — Labour leads***

Tony Benn has described Labour Listens as an "ear trumpet", which implies deafness and senility. Stethoscope might be a more helpful metaphor. If Labour is to understand the patient, diagnose the illness and recommend a cure, it needs to listen closely to the heartbeat. What it hears will not dictate the treatment: but it should certainly help to make it more appropriate. A party needs to listen to the nation not to adapt its product to the market, but to prevent it losing touch with the nature of the problems that have to be solved.

Politicians and political activists will object that they listen to the electorate all the time, in surgeries, on doorsteps, at meetings. But that is only true to a highly selective extent. The reality is that there are numerically large or pivotally-placed sections of the community with which contact is minimal or non-existent. Sometimes the problem is about understanding the way people live their lives, in order to know how best to help them. Often — perhaps even more often — it is about understanding the way that industries or sectors operate in order to make informed choices. There is as great a need to listen to the reverberations of the Big Bang as to the protests of the unemployed: taking account of the one, indeed, is necessary in order to meet the other.

The trouble with the Labour Listens campaign thus may not be that it is superfluous. It may be that it is insufficient: that, in its present form, it is merely token and patronising. But if Labour Listens could be turned into a period in which members of the Labour Party, high and low, switched off their prejudices and set off in a genuinely investigative frame of mind, then it could become something different.

Possibly the most constructive Labour Listens campaign was conducted half a century ago, at the height of the last depression. The aim was to set up a Labour Party Commission to examine the so-called Distress Areas. Then, as now, there were people who scoffed, calling it insulting and hypocritical. "Have we not had enough reports?" declared Ellen Wilkinson, the Audrey Wise of her day. "Is there a pore in the body of an unemployed man that has not been card-indexed?" The Party carried on, and over a period of months a series of thorough investigations were conducted by the NEC in Scotland, South Wales, the North East, Lancashire and West Cumberland. The report that came out of it gave Labour an industrial location strategy that has influenced regional thinking ever since. At the next year's Party Conference, Red Ellen admitted her mistake. The NEC report, she declared, was "one of the finest and most direct pieces of work that the Labour Party has undertaken".

That is the best way to make policy: by studying a problem in depth, through discussions with those most intimately involved. But first you have to go out and find them. There are plenty of people — exasperated socialists, disillusioned social democrats, progressives who have never had a party affiliation — with specific fields of expertise waiting to be tapped. The opportunity exists to draw from this well, which means stepping away from the charmed circle of friends and relations with union or party ties.

Are the NEC and Shadow Cabinet serious about Labour Listens? How many of them, this week, have phoned up a plant manager, or a nursing officer, or a mining engineer, or a Ford worker, who they have not previously known for a private, serious, dicussion? How many this weekend will be attending conferences at which they are not themselves speaking — just to sit in the back row and, well, listen? How many Labour activists, or MPs who have been critical of the campaign, will be doing the same?

The likely answer is very few, which it is why it would be naive to expect Labour Listens to significantly affect a policy review that is at risk of becoming, like many of its predecessors, a routine game of push-me-pull-you. But Labour Listens should not be scorned. If the idea, not just of listening, but of vigorously inquiring, could be made central to the whole enterprise, then the campaign could yet be transformed into the means — the only conceivable means — for an original, extremist radicalism. Labour Listens might be turned into Labour learns, Labour understands, and finally — even — Labour leads. □

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Confessions of a Commodity Broker

In 1986, lured by the glamour of the international markets and the hope of big money,* SEBASTIAN KINSMAN *took a job in the City. Now, at the ripe old age of 24, he looks back on the unexpected pressures that conspired to turn him into a retired City gent

I WAS AT A rather flat juncture in my career when I happened to read *Shooting Stars*, a novel by Nicholas Coleridge. One of the characters is a fat 32-year-old playboy who makes £350,000 in just three weeks by speculating on the coffee floor. I got the impression that this was a world in which money could be made for not much work, which has always been an ambition of mine.

I sent off for the literature and brooded over descriptions of markets in coffee, gold futures, tin, jute and oilseed. I was attracted to the world of futures and options, which is essentially a sophisticated form of gambling. It works like this: a punter agrees to buy a set amount of gold or coffee at a set price at a set date in the future, say $40,000. He or she is required to put down only ten per cent — $4,000.

The price of gold, in theory, then goes up. The punter's contract is now worth $44,000. The speculator sells, making a profit of $4,000 for an outlay of exactly that: a profit of 100 per cent. Of course, things can go wrong. Two years ago, a cartoonist from Wimbledon lost £38,470 on the commodity markets in three months; her brokers charged commission of £15,000 on the transactions.

I attended interviews at the offices of my eventual employers, and was impressed by the rich tranquillity of the premises and their setting in a leafy courtyard in the City. In the conference room, next to a bowl of irises, was a flashing green screen, which swung it as far as I was concerned; it was connected to the central Reuters data-base, and heralded the changing prices of the various contracts: pork bellies, frozen orange juice, the Japanese yen.

On the sales floor, however, conditions were harsh. The job is done exclusively by young men — no women — who compete savagely in hot smoky rooms. The work was morally dubious, to say the least, a fact which some of the employees were not totally insulated from. The turnover of salesmen was very high, and job tenure as tenuous as in any profession I can think of. But there was a genuine team spirit among the sales force. This was partly because the firm I worked for, a prominent private client futures broker, was notorious in the City, and partly because we were pressed into something of a *laager* formation.

The camaraderie was cemented with tremendous drinking bouts in the evenings: let loose at eight o'clock, groups of young men headed straight for the pubs to consume drinks of special toxicity because time was short. One particular favourite was the Jack Hawkins Depth Charge, a cocktail of drambuie and lager in which the liqueur is dropped into a full pint glass, sending up enchanting little bubbles of vapour. I would spend the first half hour each morning sluicing my system with Andrews liver salts before feeling strong enough to present a cheerful salesman's patter to my clients.

This *eśprit de corps* works to detach the salesman from the trials and tribulations his clients may be suffering. Each morning, as fresh monies-in were registered on the flashing screens on our desks, there were whoops of congratulation or, in the case of a bad performer, expressions of contempt. Management went to considerable lengths to extend this process, which set broker against client.

A huge wall-chart was maintained which monitored the commission clocked up by each salesman in each calendar month. Consistent failure meant a 'terminal target' being set up: if the salesman failed to bring in sufficient clients in the following week he would be publicly sacked, told to clear his desk, and escorted from the building on Friday afternoon. I was placed on 'terminal' in the spring of 1987, and scraped through by obtaining clients I might otherwise have passed over as unsuitable — that is, unable to sustain losses.

Another means of keeping us in order was the authority of the sales manager, who sat in a transparent booth in front of a bank of telephone consoles; through this he could tune in to any of the conversations being held on the sales floor. In this manner he became quite conversant with our private lives, and would draw on this information bare-facedly.

Extravagant

Against all this, the rewards for success in futures broking are extravagant. Two years ago, the sales director of the firm I worked for was, at the age of 28, the country's highest paid director: he earned £1,545,000 and as much again from company dividends, compared with the £980,000 earned by Sir Ralph Halpern of the Burton Group. It was because of this that job applications flooded the company; the type of person attracted tended to be impulsive to the point of rashness, since working in the world I have described precludes the possibility of finding work in the future with more orthodox financial institutions. Ex-employees would occasionally be sighted manning a second-hand bookshop in Cheltenham or drugged in the South China Seas.

My colleagues often had personal ambitions which went beyond simple money but which needed a lot of funding. On my desk was a young solo trans-Atlantic yachtsman (something we actually verified, knowing that salesmen talk a lot of hot air) who wanted to do nothing but sail. Many of them had interesting pasts — the yachtsman, for some reason, was banned from France. But I also noticed an increasing element in the intake of young men from East London and the Essex hinterlands with razor-keen instincts for accumulating money, and who were quick to use their clients' first names.

High Street Man

It still surprises me, given the reputation that commodities have, that it was so easy to draw High Street Man into speculating on them. A common observation among the salesmen was that husbands were much more partial to the ideas we sowed than their wives; we prepared appropriate selling ploys to get round the objection "Well, I'm very keen but I'll have to talk to my wife about this", which was often the sale's death-knell. I would often picture my clients in my mind's eye, sitting at a desk on a Monday morning, enveloped in greyness, examining urban views resembling a Gilbert and George painting, and waiting for something — an earth tremor or a shaft of sunlight — to happen. I believe that many of them realised that futures are not a genuine business proposition but proceeded for the hell of it, and I do not say this to get myself off the hook. This idea was never, or very rarely, voiced by a client, but is substantiated by the fact that many clients forbade us to call them at home or stipulated that we should not announce the company's name to their wives. If you have the money to lose, futures are a lot of fun and the game involves a lot of client participation.

We used two main selling techniques: the Hard Sell and the Negative Sell. I remember trying my hand at the Hard Sell, which I was not fond of or good at. It relies mainly on endurance, and is a process of battering down the client's defences and countering objections so he or she is almost bound to buy the futures contract even without wanting to.

This type of sale often results in stopped cheques. And sometimes I was outwitted. I remember trying the Hard Sell on an Indian restaurateur to whom I talked interminably; he occasionally dropped me a crumb of encouragement so I would not give up on him. I think he enjoyed playing me along. One day he came to lunch with me, and I became quite drunk while he stayed determinedly sober. Over coffee back at the office I tried to pull myself together and sell him a Traded Option in copper which would, as it turned out, have made him quite a lot of money. I was with him for four hours and got nowhere; I requested colleagues to have a crack at him, all to no avail. After this episode I stopped telephoning him, only to find he enjoyed the game

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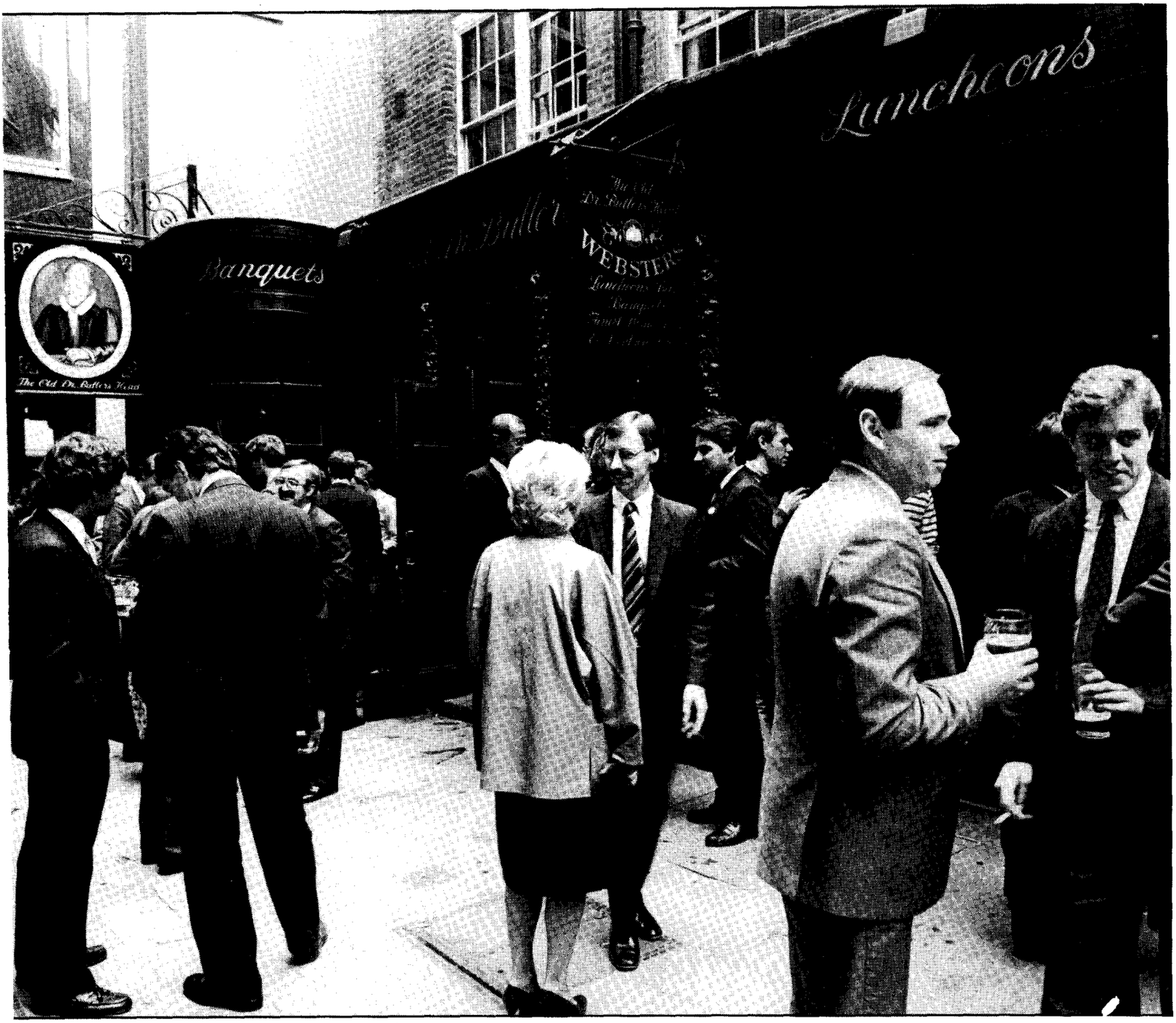

Let loose at 8pm, groups of young men head straght for the pubs . . . Keith McMillan

> ***While the futures market is a morally dubious game, it's rarely actually fraudulent . . . Rewards for success in futures broking are extravagant***

so much that he began calling me.

The Negative Sell was generally much more successful. This technique gives the client the idea that the company is a juggernaut of success which hardly needs new business. On the other hand, the client would be foolish not to try and jump on the bandwagon and take a stake in this success . . . For it would appear to any intelligent investor that a successful brokerage must be doing successful business for its clients — which is not actually the case at all.

You may by now be wondering how companies like the one I've been describing go from strength to strength without attracting the attention of investigative journalists. The answer is that they don't, but the effect of bad publicity is, in the end, negligible. Following an exposé on television or in a newspaper, it was generally felt by salesmen that business would describe a J-curve in the next few months. Some clients might pull out in the immediate aftermath, but later on prospective clients might admit to having "heard of you somewhere" and be even readier to part with their money. I can't confirm this, and it might well have been a myth put round by management to cheer us up.

Perhaps I should end on an optimistic note by saying that while the futures market is a morally dubious game, it's rarely actually fradulent, though it isn't the thing to get into if profit is your main consideration. But then, on the other hand, neither is any other form of gambling. Having finished this article, I treated myself to a trip to Edinburgh races and dropped my week's disposable income on a horse named Copper Market. □

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OFF THE WALL

Ottawa

Here for pleasure. Some don't believe that Canada can be fun, but I find it so, and more. A Canadian friend says they are blessed with two things lacking in the culture of Big Brother to the south: a sense of irony, and a non-decimated, steely left. Perhaps the two are linked.

But Canada is uncomfortably merged with the States, and the boundaries of a "national identity" — cultural, economic, politico-military — constantly crystallise into view and then recede, mirage-like. The facts: this New Year saw Prime Minister Mulroney and President Reagan sign an historic free-trade treaty, designed to tear down the last vestiges of Canadian protectionism and boost already gigantic mutual trade figures.

Other signs are more "subtle". Early morning I'm startled awake by a radio headline: "Where there's war there's hope." Reeling with Orwellian shock, I tune my ears in further. Turns out to be an apparently timeless story of Bob Hope, entertaining American marines on board aircraft carriers in the Gulf — on *Canadian* prime time radio news. "Our boys . . ."?

○

Canadians are grateful recipients of a welfarist state, now under siege, especially since Mulroney's Conservatives came to power. It is this paternal state that has stood as *the* mark of difference from the US. So Canadians look with alarm over the ocean at what is happening to the British welfare state, their historic model. But privatisation of welfare develops apace here: the new Civic Hospital is built around a huge shopping mall, an "innovation" sold on its ability to feed revenue back into healthcare. Canadian paternalism comes with a kickback: the work ethic is serious, and so is fun (serious). People start work at 7am, stop at 3pm, and then take further education courses. After that, it's time for (serious) sport. A fit body is a Social Good. Understandably, all this health desexualises Canadian Leisure. This is a culture of striving.

Canadian media carry constant messages — state-sponsored — that anxiously reinforce what is least there: a sense of national identity. I nod awake again, after the radio news, to hear a woman's actuality voice: "I guess the main thing I gained which I will always treasure is close friendship with other women . . ." Announcer: "Girl Guides Canada, Guides Canada" (in French). Teasing ambiguity squashed. Only in such a sexless culture could this carry no further meaning.

○

We have friends to lunch, whose experience embodies the good and the bad of the Canadian state. Sue, a Méti — or mixed native Canadian and French blood — grew up on land lying between two native reservations: the Métis are in between official classifications, neither native nor white. Yet state policies were less ambiguous. Sue — eloquent, articulate — depicts a childhood structured by the knowledge that the state hoped that most of her people would die from the new contact diseases of TB, measles. This was genocide through neglect, disguised as a "healthy" eugenics.

Sue recalls her grandmother, the formidable Angélique, who decreed poetically, "We shall go quiet for two generations. Let there be two hundred cousins before we make ourselves known again." This pro-natal strategy — groups simply making sure that they became strong and flourished — was their main, "quiet", form of resistance. Strange men who wandered into the camp were, unawares, seized upon as useful fathering material.

Laughing, Sue conjured up images of male innocents submitting to copious female demands, not knowing what hit them. Their contribution was known to provide a more rugged genetic mix than fathers from within the group, designed to maximise immunological strength and resistance to disease. This canny, unsentimental attitude towards sex puts the exoticised and irrationalist anthropological concept of exogamy (marriage outside the group) in a very different light: as enlightened, scientific and, above all, subordinate to the deeper needs of the group as a whole. Sexuality as social.

○

Unlike the UK, Canadian psychiatry and psychoanalysis are available to all, due to universal health insurance which covers mental illness. Also unlike the UK, rather than extreme hostility (between the organic-medical and psychodynamic approaches), the two cooperate in diagnosis and in deciding on suitable treatment. This constructive arrangement contains, however, bizarre anomalies.

A psychoanalyst friend talks of patients on the dole who come to sessions but cannot afford the return bus fare. She helps them out. The health insurance plan is, after all, subsidising her at the rate of some $60 a session. Contradictory humanist values: Canadian dole is not rent-related, so claimants may be homeless, but in psychoanalysis.

But is this cooperation — which would already be revolutionary in the UK — efficient enough? Tom, our other guest at lunch, was diagnosed schizophrenic in adolescence and has since undergone the full range of drug and institutional treatments, and psychotherapy. A year ago, by chance, it was discovered that he has a rare metabolic condition. It becomes clear that his "schizophrenia" may derive from this organic problem and its intensification over 15 years — a period that might have seen recovery if he'd been treated. Humiliated, and angry at the possibility of negligence when he was originally diagnosed, Tom talks of suing for years of distress.

Our analyst friend talks of the need to reconsider organic factors in mental illness; and of the uses of computerised help — in the form of diagnostic "expert systems" — for non-specialist doctors to keep up with research. For her, brought up in the 60s climate of anti-psychiatry, this is radical heresy. Will this be the age, at last, of integrating organic and emotional approaches to mental suffering?

We wade through the snow one night to see Spielberg's latest epic, *Empire of the Sun*, which rekindles the heat of my instinctive Luddism. As always with Spielberg, technology stars: machines are fetishised, stand to compensate for imperfect human relations. I am nauseated by the film, by Spielberg's relentless and omnipotent control of the viewer. Watching, with tension constantly built and unsatisfactorily dissipated, is like being inexpertly manipulated towards orgasm.

○

Sammy and Rosie Get Laid is the big hit in town, especially with the large ex-pat British community. The billboards announce "While London Burns . . . (S and R etc)." Riled by this repulsive film, my instinct is nationalist pride: to jump and defend the essentially civilised and sane state of the UK. I find faintly obscene the morbid enjoyment of what are clearly exaggerated and lurid fantasies of urban decay. Drooling the ex-pats appear to relish their escape from a nation in terminal crisis. As a well-worn party game, they taunt me to tell what's happening: is it *really* as bad as it seems? I start off haughtily, with "Don't put down the UK" and so on. Then I get specific: the new education bill; the health service. The room gets quiet, incredulous, and the silence feeds back, so that I hear what I'm saying for what it really is: surreal.

"How can popular schools go on taking in pupils without limit?" someone asks. "Three-tier universities, divorcing teaching from research?" "A core curriculum without arts?" The main development in my stay is a creeping awareness of the difficulty of transcending a fragmented perception of the "real" state of the UK, fed by contending propagandas. How much is it "terminal crisis" and how much "efficiency and growth"?

○

I visit a close Canadian woman friend who's ill in bed with multiple mysterious ailments (who said hysteria no longer exists?), the latest a back pain so severe she is near paralysed. Our lives are running along uncannily parallel trax. We gaze amusedly into each other's eyes/I's. And I smile, empathetically, at her story of six months' dilemma of the heart. On the one hand, vibrant radical intellectuals/artists: politically consonant male companions who, in her words, act like "schmucks" and can be relied on to cause maximum pain; and on the other, "nice, caring, kind" men who fail to stimulate politically and intellectually. A classic split. "Why," she rails, "can't we have both in one?"

We sling together ad hoc totalising theories, to do with narcissism which demands, tyrranically, to find its own reflection, and cannot actually deal with difference. "But you always get *something* from those relationships with narcissistic men", she whines, doubtfully. Yeah, "Masochism!" we laugh in unison.

Georgina Born

Georgina Born is an anthropologist, a musician, and teaches at Brunel University.

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Labour authorities make lousy landlords

JOLYON JENKINS *delves into the council housing jungle — and finds an undemocratic mess which reflects badly on the Labour authorities*

THE REPORTS of the Local Government Ombudsman are more interesting than one might think, and more depressing than one would like. Here are some recent nuggets:

☐ Manchester City Council told Mr X in 1985 that they wanted to move him out of his council flat so they could carry out repairs to it. They reassured him that he would be able to move back when the work had been done. But a year after he went he discovered that his home had been let to somebody else. The Ombudsman found that Manchester had been guilty of maladministration.

☐ Mrs A, who also lives in Manchester, told the council that she wanted a housing transfer because of difficulties with her neighbours. She claimed that Mr B had assaulted her, had formed a noisy pop group, and played loud drums throughout the night. But the council refused to transfer her. The Ombudsman ruled that the council was guilty of maladministration by refusing to investigate fully Mrs A's allegations.

☐ A Lambeth resident complained that the council hadn't mended the broken doorbells to her block of flats despite several requests. The Ombudsman found that although a "job ticket" had been issued in 1983, four years later the work had not been carried out. It was maladministration amounting to injustice, he ruled.

☐ Mrs Wood, another Lambeth council tenant, was burgled four times since 1981: each time the criminals had got through an unlocked hatch into the communal loft, broken through Mrs Wood's ceiling and dropped into her flat. Several times she asked the council to put a lock on the hatch, but they never did. When she finally put one of her own on, the council removed it. When the Ombudsman asked Lambeth to explain themselves they blamed their inaction on "lack of finance". (How much does a padlock cost?)

Even a brief browse through these reports gives the unavoidable impression that Labour authorities make lousy landlords. In the Ombudsman's last annual report, Labour administrations outnumber Conservative ones by nearly four to one in findings of "maladministration amounting to injustice" over housing. Of course, Labour authorities have more council property and less money than Conservative ones, and private landlords can be just as bad. Nor are Labour authorities systematically and deliberately unpleasant to their tenants, like, for example, Tory controlled Wandsworth, which sometimes evicts when arrears reach £500. But it's striking how often certain Labour authorities — Hackney, Liverpool, Lambeth — seem to let down their tenants.

> ***Points levels are now so high that people who by some fluke make the grade are virtually indistinguishable, in terms of deprivation, from the homeless***

The Tories know all about this. The unlikely duo of Nicholas Ridley and William Waldegrave, representing the Department of the Environment, happily banged on about it during the second reading of the Housing Bill, which allows council tenants to vote for private landlords. However doctrinaire and unworkable the government's proposals, however gerrymandered their Bill's proposed voting system, and however shamelessly they have hamstrung Labour councils over the years, they do at least have this fact on their side: council housing is an undemocratic jungle, and it's partly the fault of Labour landlords.

The concept of "choice" — a word Ridley likes — is quite absent. To take an extreme example: last month, a man living on the Gloucester Grove council estate in Peckham, South London was shot, in a "kneecapping" operation. A few days later, his wife found a dead animal had been deposited outside her flat, in a clear piece of intimidation. Clearly the council, Southwark, urgently needed to get the family rehoused. The good news was that because of the obvious danger to their lives the family was given the maximum priority. The bad news was that even among this most urgent category there is a waiting list of *nearly a year*.

Points systems mysteries

In this case it isn't the council's fault. Southwark are doing their best for the woman — they just don't have enough homes. But in housing allocation generally it often seems as though tenants are being deliberately deprived of power. Secrecy over the points systems by which tenants are allocated housing is a particularly blatant example. The 1980 Housing Act forces local councils to tell tenants what points system they use, but the fine details can remain a mystery. Anne Power, a housing academic at the LSE, reports in her recent book *Property Before People* that: "In several local authorities . . . only one housing officer or one tightly organised and secretive section of the housing department, actually called a 'lettings cell' in one local authority, knew the workings of the whole lettings system, in order to 'ensure fairness' and prevent housing managers, prey to pushy tenants or hard-luck stories, from being able to influence decisions."

The secrecy continues. Several researchers have found it hard to find out how, for example, Tower Hamlets (Labour before 1986; now Liberal) allocated housing between families who are in roughly the same need. And despite the statutory obligation, it takes some determination even to discover what points systems councils use. Eight London boroughs promised to send me copies of their explanatory leaflets; only three did, and two of them were Conservative.

Points in themselves are pernicious. In Hillingdon (Conservative) a family wanting to move into a two bed flat needs 75 points, a virtual impossibility. Take the stereotypical family of mother, father and two children. If they live in a one bedroom flat with no hot water, have a cooker on the landing and an external lavatory; if one of them has a moderately serious medical condition — and if all this has been the case for 12 years, *then* they would tot up just 74 points.

Camden (Labour) is no better. A Mum and Dad with three teenage children, living in a severely damp two bedroom flat on a tenth floor would be less than half way to the 150 points they need, and the level is rising all the time. A former local government officer in Hackney (Labour) remembers: "It was quite an event if we got in an application with enough points for rehousing. We would show it to everyone in the office." In Tower Hamlets it takes almost a year for somebody to visit you *just to check your points*.

For single people, the points system becomes even more of an insult. CHAR — the Campaign for Single Homeless People — recently found that East Yorkshire District Council allowed single people to go on waiting lists at 30, but wouldn't offer them accommodation until they reached retirement age — a minimum wait of 30 years. Some councils will offer flats to *very* young single people on the grounds that they are at risk, leading to unseemly scrambles by an authority's homeless persons' unit to get people on waiting lists before their seventeenth birthday, and even more cynical delaying tactics by the council to avoid registering them until after that date has passed.

Most councils now barely use their elaborate waiting list systems, because their legal obligations to house homeless families have to come first. Ironically, points levels are now so high that people who by some fluke make the grade are in any case virtually indistinguishable, in terms of

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deprivation, from the homeless. (This doesn't stop some councils maintaining full-staffed allocation units to operate their moribund points system: workers who might be better deployed giving help to people in the equally jungle-like private rented sector.)

People who get rehoused are so badly off that it hardly makes sense to try to differentiate between levels of deprivation. Ranking by points, which was at least comparatively open, has become replaced by opaque systems of "priorities", where favouritism and special pleading can more easily go undetected.

One borough which now has a priority system is Greenwich. The names of the priority categories themselves sound like Bingo calls: "two for one", "like for like", "council's interest". Hard as it is to grasp, canny tenants, astute as any City tax advisor, spot loopholes. Here's a current favourite: if a relationship (marital or generational) breaks down, it's council policy to rehouse *both* parties. Suppose a couple with one child living in a two bed flat have a marital breakdown. The man gets a one bed flat, and the woman and child get a two bed flat. Then, under the "two for one" rule, they can stage a "reconciliation" and are entitled to swop the two flats for a *three* bed flat — or better still, a house.

Another dodge: a homeless family living in temporary accommodation is offered a new flat. It isn't what they want, but it's a "reasonable" offer and they know they'll only get one chance. Under the rules they can lodge a "member's appeal" direct to the councillors. Since there are no votes in being nasty to *individual* tenants, the councillors will do all they can to find reasons for treating the case as special. Better still, it can take two years for the case to come to appeal, during which time the family can carry on living in the temporary accommodation (which might be much more pleasant than the flat they've been offered). And the culminating beauty is that even if they do lose the appeal, the flat will long since have been let, so the whole question has become academic. Having made policies, the councillors have devised procedures which undermine them.

Good intentions

That's not to say that councillors don't have good intentions, but these don't always translate into helpful policies. It seemed admirable, for example, to let everyone on the Greenwich waiting list know how many points they had. But by doing so the council unwittingly encouraged tenants to falsely believe that they could help themselves. It was hopeless: most people had no chance of *ever* getting enough points, and if by some chance they did, they could still be told "sorry, you're not a priority". In the end, Greenwich stopped automatically telling people how many points they had, unless the tenant specifically asked.

This all leads tenants to the perfectly correct realisation that the only way to improve their lot is to make their living conditions *worse*. On Greenwich's grim Ferrier estate, notorious for its lethal asbestos, plagues of Pharoah ants, and the murder of Kimberley Carlisle, it's a commonplace among tenants that "the only way you'll get out is to firebomb your flat". This is more than an urban myth. On Entwhistle Heights, a tower block in Liverpool (now demolished), more than ten flats were burned out — it is assumed by tenants wanting to get out. In Speke, other tenants were actually convicted of arson.

What else can you do? Well, another high risk strategy is to stop paying the rent. There are estates in Southwark with tenants whose arrears now stand at several thousand pounds. Chasing up the arrears is an unpleasant and authoritarian duty which few housing officers see as a priority. Since unemployed tenants can barely afford to pay their rents, huge and mounting arrears are inevitable. The Audit Commission reported in 1987 that among eight inner London (Labour) authorities, total arrears were a fifth of the annual rent revenue. Councils often operate two conflicting strategies to deal with tenants in arrears. The first is to refuse to give them transfers. Since the chances of a transfer are virtually non-existent anyway, this is an ineffective sanction. The second strategy is to evict them. But unless the council is able to argue that the tenants have made themselves "intentionally homeless", it will have to rehouse them anyway. A family with bad arrears on a "sink" estate may rationally judge that the best way to get rehoused is to withhold rent and hope for eviction. Only a single person, which the authority will have no obligation to rehouse, has much to fear from arrears.

And in many authorities you could almost believe that the housing department is positively encouraging tenants to go into arrears. The council will send out a warning letter, then another, and another . . . but everyone knows very well that no real action will be taken. One authority tried sending a plaintive circular to all tenants, pointing out that the high level of arrears was leaving the council hard up, and putting a "moral" argument that the non-payers were cheating on the payers. The result was to underline the council's impotence and reassure tenants who were badly in arrears that they were not alone.

Real reform needs money. The housing stock is ageing, dwindling and crumbling through the government's scandalous refusal to allow investment in it. But the money won't come — in fact it will get less, as the government outlaws cross-subsidy from the rates (but not rate subsidy from council rents). In the meantime, there are ways of greatly improving things which cost nothing. One is through techniques pioneered by the Priority Estates Project (PEP) of the Department of the Environment. Simply, it means massive decentralisation. A housing office on each estate deals with all problems locally. Repairs are done by an on-site team (instead of by the Direct Labour Organisation based at the town

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hall); rent arrears become the responsibility of the local management; transfers are dealt with locally, and sometimes there is a local waiting list.

All the evidence is that PEP is very successful in making the worst estates more habitable, and pays for itself by reducing arrears and deterring vandalism. The evidence also suggests that without local management even the best estates deteriorate. Liverpool City Council, under Militant, demolished the "Piggeries" — slum blocks — and built pleasant low-rise brick houses. House building was a vote-winning policy but housing *management* was a lower priority. They didn't decentralise, and all the old abuses remained: repairs, for example, just didn't happen, even though sometimes the work was recorded as having been done. Power did not devolve, and within a few years those nice little houses had become sink estates and there were calls to demolish them.

PEP is politically fascinating. Its philosophy, of state-sponsored hyper-devolution, is not what you would expect from this centralising, privatising government. It also goes against the grain in that it's harder to sell off well-run estates, with organised, involved tenants, to private developers. And the degree to which Labour councils have cooperated with it is interesting. Some councils — Islington, for example — were moving in that direction anyway, since it's a perfect example of "enabling socialism". Only Lambeth, in its opposition to rate-capping, felt that it couldn't be seen to be co-operating with central government, and pulled out of PEP.

More cosmetic than real

Slowly, Labour councils are participating in PEP, or setting up decentralisation programmes of their own. But home-grown schemes are often more cosmetic than real, and aimed partly at warding off the DoE. According to Anne Power, who set up PEP in the first place, they "show many of the signs of encrusted rigidity, high cost, complex central control, functional specialism and inadequate service that marked the previous era."

There have been good local schemes. The 1,120 flat Gloucester Grove estate in Peckham used to be one of those places where you could cut the anomie with a knife. Since 1981 the estate had a local office, mainly because one housing officer, Alan Goddard, pushed to be allowed to open it. It's still not a particularly pleasant place, but by quantitative criteria it has been a success. Goddard has reduced "voids" (empty properties) from 110 to 26, and squatting from 161 down to 7. Total arrears are much higher than they were — £891,000 instead of £185,000 — but instead of being the highest in the borough per dwelling, they are now way down the league table.

Yet only in November did Southwark Council decide to set up a full network of decentralised estate offices. Throughout the country progress is tantalisingly slow, and it's only recently that the national Labour party has stopped "siding with municipal landlords, jealously opposing any independent movement of tenants which threatened their guardianship of the working classes," (as former housing officer and lecturer Stephanie Cooper puts it). While Ridley and Waldegrave complete their outflanking movement with the Housing Bill, the Opposition can hardly claim they didn't see it coming. □

SCREEN MEMORY

Hunting Nazis and losing reality

Provoked by Victor Farias' book Heidegger and Nazism, a debate is raging in France over the German philosopher's fascist allegiances, his guilt or innocence — a debate which in some ways echoes the polemics of the Waldheim affair.

JEAN BAUDRILLARD ***looks at what's behind the media's compulsive scrutiny of modern history's most terrible events***

Jean Baudrillard — probably the most influential contemporary media analyst and social theorist — is at last being published in Britain. A collection of his essays and articles is coming from Polity Press in April, and *America*, his account of his US "travels in hyperreality", from Verso in October

THE FUTILE QUARREL over Heidegger has no specific meaning within philosophy. It is merely symptomatic of a weakness in current thinking. Unable to find any new energy, philosophical thought keeps going back obsessively over its origins, over the purity of its references; it is now painfully re-living, in this *fin de siècle* period, its own primal scene of the early part of the century.

More generally, the Heidegger case is symptomatic of the collective vogue for revivals that has taken hold of this society as it begins its end-of-century stock-taking: a revival of fascism, nazism and extermination. The same temptation to re-examine the century's historical primal scene is at work here, a temptation to sweep away the corpses and clear up the historical record, but at the same time there is also in all this a perverse fascination with a return to the wellsprings of violence, a collective attempt to hallucinate the historical truth of evil. Our present imagination must be weak indeed and our indifference to our own situation and our own philosophising very great for us to need such regressive magic.

In the case of Heidegger, we are suddenly discovering his act of intellectual treachery (if such it was) today, even though we have lived quite happily with it for 40 years. We have seen the same thing happen with Marx and Freud. When Marxist thought lost its triumphal aura, people started ferreting about in Marx's life and discovered that he was a bourgeois who slept with his maid. When psychoanalytic thought began to lose its uncontested influence, people began looking into Freud's own life and psychology and, inevitably, found he was sexist and patriarchal. Now we have Heidegger accused of being a Nazi.

The fact that he has been so accused and that efforts are being made to prove his innocence is really of no consequence: both parties to the quarrel have fallen into the same undignified and mean-minded intellectual trap. It is an enervated form of thinking which no longer even has pride in its own basic tenets, nor the energy to go beyond them, and which is squandering what energy it still possesses in historical trials, accusations, justifications and verifications. Is this the self-defence of the philosophical world casting a suspicious eye on the dubious morals of its masters? Or perhaps the self-defence of an entire society which, having proved unable to generate a new history, is condemned to keep on re-hashing previous history to prove its own existence, or even to prove its own crimes?

But what is this proof? It is because we have disappeared *today* politically and historically (this is our real problem) that we want to prove we actually died between 1940 and 1945 at Auschwitz or at Hiroshima — that at least is a kind of history that really has some weight to it. In this we are behaving just like the Armenians who never stop trying to prove that they were massacred in 1917;

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> ***We shall never know if Nazism, the concentration camps or Hiroshima were inelligible or not. We are no longer in the same mental universe***

an inaccessible, futile proof, but one which in a way is vital to them. It is because philosophy today has disappeared (that is its problem: how can it live on in a state of disappearance?) that it has to prove that it was definitively compromised by what Heidegger did, or rendered aphasic by Auschwitz. What is happening, then, is a desperate attempt to snatch a posthumous truth from history, a posthumous exculpation — and this at a moment when there is precisely not enough truth around to allow us to arrive at any sort of verification, nor enough philosophy to ground any relation whatever between theory and practice, nor enough history to produce any kind of historical proof of what happened.

Too late

We tend to forget too easily that our reality comes down to us through the media, the tragic events of the past included. That means that it is too late to verify and understand them historically, for precisely what characterises our period, our *fin-de-siècle,* is the fact that the tools of historical intelligibility have disappeared. History had to be understood while there still was history. Heidegger should have been denounced (or defended) while there was still time. A trial can only be conducted when there is some way for justice to take its course afterwards. It is too late now; we have been moved on to other things, as we have seen with *Holocaust* and even with *Shoah* on television. Those phenomena were not understood at the time when we still had the means to understand them. They will not be understood now. This is so because such fundamental notions as responsibility, objective cause and the meaning (or non-meaning) of history have already disappeared or are disappearing. The effects of moral conscience, of collective conscience are entirely media effects, and you can see from the extraordinary therapeutic efforts being made to resuscitate that conscience how little life is left in it.

We shall never know if Nazism, the concentration camps or Hiroshima were intelligible or not. We are no longer in the same mental universe. The reversibility of victim and torturer, the diffraction and dissolution of responsibility — these are the virtues of our marvellous *interface* today. We no longer have the strength to forget; our amnesia is the amnesia of images. Amnesties seem impossible: since everyone is guilty, who could declare one? As for autopsies, no one believes in the anatomical veracity of facts any more: we work on models. Even if the facts were there staring us in the face, we would not be convinced.

Thus, the more we have poured over Nazism and the gas chambers in an effort to analyse those things, the less intelligible they have become and we have in the end arrived quite logically at the improbable question: "When it comes down to it, did all these things really exist?" The question may be stupid, or morally indefensible, but what is interesting is what makes it logically *possible* to ask it: the way the media have substituted themselves for events, ideas and history. This means that the longer you examine these phenomena, the more you master all the details to identify their causes, the more their existence fades, the more they come to have not existed at all: a confusion over the identity of things induced by the very act of investigating and memorising them. An indifference of memory, an indifference to history that is exactly equal to the very efforts made to objectify it. One day we shall ask ourselves if Heidegger himself really existed. Faurisson's* paradox may seem abominable — and, insofar as he claims that the gas chambers did not exist historically, it *is* abominable — but, in a sense, it exactly expresses the situation of an entire culture — the dead-end that our *fin-de-siècle* society has got itself into, fascinated as it is to the point of distraction by the horror of its own origins. Since it is impossible to forget those origins, the only way out is denial.

If proof is futile here, as there is no historical discourse in which to conduct a trial, punishment is also impossible. Nothing can atone for Auschwitz and the holocaust. There is no possible way of fitting the punishment to the crime, and the unreality of a possible punishment makes the facts themselves seem unreal. What we are living through has nothing to do with all this. What is happening right now, collectively, confusedly, in all these trials and polemics is the transition from the phase of history to a phase of myth. We are seeing the mythic reconstruction — the media reconstruction — of all these events. And in a sense this mythic conversion is the only operation which can, if not perhaps morally exculpate us, at least absolve us in phantasy of responsibility for this original crime. But before this process can take place, before a crime can become a myth, the crime has first to be divested of its historical reality. Otherwise, since we have been, and still are, unable to come to terms historically with all these things — fascism, concentration camps, extermination — we would be condemned to repeat them eternally as a primal scene.

Collective hallucination

It is not nostalgia for fascism that is dangerous. What is dangerous and lamentable is this pathological revival of the past, which everyone — both those who deny and those who assert the reality of the gas chambers, both Heidegger's critics and his supporters — is currently participating (indeed virtually conniving) in, this collective hallucination which transfers the power of imagination that is lacking from our own period, and all the burden of violence and reality, which has today become merely illusory, back to that earlier period in a sort of compulsion to re-live its history, a compulsion accompanied by a profound sense of guilt at not having been there.

All this is a desperate emotional response to the realisation that the events in question are currently eluding us at the level of reality. The Heidegger affair, the Barbie trial, etc., are the pathetic little convulsions produced by the loss of reality that afflicts us today and Faurisson's propositions are simply the cynical transposition of that loss of reality into the past. Faurisson's "None of this ever existed" quite simply means that we do not even exist enough today to sustain a memory, and that all that remains to give us a sense of being alive are the techniques of hallucination.

Postscript: in view of all this, could we not just skip the rest of this century? I intend to launch a collective petition (which will make a change from the usual humanitarian or presidential petitions) calling for the 1990s to be cancelled, so that we can pass directly from 1989 to the year 2000. As the *fin-de-siècle* has already arrived, with all its necro-cultural pathos, its endless lamentations, commemorations and mummifications, do we really have to spend another ten boring years on this same old treadmill? □

*Notorious "revisionist" historian who has sought to deny the historical reality of Nazi extermination policies.

Translated by Material Word.
First published as "Nécrospective antour de Martin Heidegger" in *Libération* 27 January.

FABIAN society

WEBB ESSAY COMPETITION

First prize: £500
Second prize: £250

1. Entries are now invited for the 1988 Webb Essay Competition on the subject of: **"Can socialism be popular?"**. Entrants must be under 31 on 31 March 1988 (ie born on or after 1 April 1957).
2. The judges will be Glenys Kinnock, Peter Mandelson, Austin Mitchell, Lisanne Radice and John Willman. The winner will receive £500, with £250 for the runner-up.
3. Essays should be between 2,000 and 5,000 words, preferably typed on one side of the paper only.
4. Entrants must submit their essays to the Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN no later than 5.30pm on 31 March 1988. Entries must be accompanied with the name and address of the entrant, their date of birth and telephone number (daytime where possible).
5. The result of the competition will be published in the *New Statesman* on 27 May 1988 and the May/June issue of *Fabian News*.
6. The decision of the judges will be final, and no correspondence will be entered into about the results of the competition. Essays will not be returned unless submitted with a stamped addressed envelope.

Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN Tel: 01-222 8877

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DEBATE ON EUROPE

Two enthusiasts agree

JOHN LLOYD *argues that we can best shape our futures through the EC*

IN HIS FAREWELL to the stewardship of *The Guardian*'s Agenda page on the eve of the paper's redesign, Richard Gott gave us a threnody for ebbing values. He said his favourite politician-contributors were Tony Benn and Enoch Powell: largely because "they represent in this generation the splendid little England tradition of Cobden and Bright, who resist the terrible European and Atlanticist enthusiasms . . . "

This *Gotterdämmerung* was very cheering. It is not before time that the choking alliance of right and left British nationalism is giving way to real signs that our politicians should again pick up the challenge that Edward Heath posed more than a decade and a half ago: way behind time, that the left should see in European Community membership a means both of technical and political modernisation, and that they should discover that the interests of the people they claim to represent are best served by the *closer* integration of the only geographically contingent grouping of open, liberal-social democracies in the world. We should not be mourning the demise of Powell-Benn chauvinism: we should be dancing on its grave.

We won't be joining the dance all in one glad leap, though. When the Prime Minister returned from Brussels last weekend at the end of a 36-hour negotiating session on the Community budget, she was instantly denounced as selling out Britain's interests: Gerald Kaufman, the shadow foreign secretary, said she had come home "with a bent knee". Kaufman, of course, has an oppositional job to do: and it was remarkable that neither he, nor European spokesman George Robertson ("all her tough talking has only alienated her partners"), nor Treasury spokesman Stuart Holland ("it seems as if Britain is being penalised for an efficient farm industry"), were anything like as vitriolic as the Tory anti-marketeers — of whom the most unforgiving, Teddy Taylor, spoke of the deal as "little short of a disaster and a humiliation". To be sure, Thatcher has allowed a cereals production limit of 160m tonnes a year, 5m higher than her own advertised extreme upper limit; a much smaller-than-advertised price reduction penalty for production over the limit; while agricultural spending, at between £19 and £20bn, is also higher than she said she would settle for. In a Community in which agricultural spending dominates all else, and the French and West German farmers benefit above all others, it is clearly sensible for *any* British minister to focus pressure on getting the subsidies down.

European ideal

But she did also concede that regional spending to aid the relatively lesser developed southern states in the EC would rise by 80, rather than her initially preferred 50, per cent and that will double over the next few years. Agreement on the agricultural budget should allow a Community budget to be set: that done, progress could be resumed on the snails-pace legislation needed to make the EC member countries one large, non-tariff, internal market by the early part of next decade. In every press except the British, the agreement last weekend was hailed as a triumph for the European ideal — albeit with some crowing, especially by the Coq Gaulois, that it was achieved over the twitching figure of the British Prime Minister.

We lack almost entirely, in our debates on the Community, a framework within which success or failure within it is discussed in terms other than those of the national exchequer: it is thus always a zero sum game. In the fullest report on the summit, in last Sunday's *Observer*, ("How they turned the Lady"), Nigel Hawkes referred only obliquely and in passing to "the fact she has for once been forced onto the retreat does not mean that the deal struck here is necessarily a bad one. Rather the contrary, most enthusiasts for the European ideal would reckon". Apart from the Euro-enthusiasts on her own benches — and most of these, like Heath and Michael Heseltine, are presently sidelined — and the shards of the Alliance, our politicians tend to scrap over who is the littlest Englander.

There is nothing in democratic socialism which prescribes this. The Italian left has made communitarianism a central part of its pitch for decades: in France, left and right vie for custodianship of the European ideal. And how about this for an unambiguous statement of European idealism:

> The European Community, which has begun to unite the Western part of our continent, allows all Europeans to hope that national tensions and hostilities can be overcome through joint action for the wellbeing of all our peoples. Self assertiveness by Europe will mean the pooling of its forces in the Western part, specifically to lead to no less an objective than an all-European peace order. The European Community will be indispensable to our economic and social self-assertiveness. It can and must lend Europe more weight in international relations. It represents an opportunity for peace and social democracy. Important social democratic objectives can no longer be accomplished within the boundaries of a single country . . .

That is from the West German SPD's draft for a new manifesto, now being thrashed through the various levels of the party's membership.

None of this means that other West European politicians are any the less raucous in pursuit of national or electoral interest in their appearances on the Brussels stage. On the contrary: when Jacques Chirac said "Couillons!" (bollocks) to Mrs Thatcher last weekend, we can bet it was not simply the outburst of an exasperated man, but a calculating piece of populism which he knew would be broadcast round the country whose President he wishes soon to be. It *does* mean that part of their explicit pitch, on which they are tested in their own polls, is adherence to a European political identity which will progressively erode simple nationalism.

We have been shut out from that for 15 wasted years. Labour's group in Brussels/Strasbourg has been distinguished, until recently, by its extraordinary narrowness and myopia: its leading figures — Richard Balfe, Les Huckfield and Alf Lomas — used their seats either as a self-confessed springboard to Westminster, or as a platform from which to conduct a war of attrition on Britain's membership, or both. Co-operation — even contact — with other European socialists has been grudging and minimal: and even such redoubtable political figures as Barbara Castle and Janey Buchan have not cared to distinguish themselves from the woeful spectacle of chauvinism and cant.

Now, at last, we can see a real change. Neil Kinnock, sloughing off his own past hostility to the Community, has with characteristic vigour been providing covering fire for the emergence of a new grouping, which sees itself as there to do a job. Kinnock made it quietly clear, late last year, that he wanted Labour to fight the next Euro-elections on a manifesto agreed jointly with the other Euro-socialist parties: in his recent visit to Brussels, he publicly buried Labour's anti-Europeanism. A conference organised last November by Frances Morrell, the former ILEA leader, and Carol Tongue, East London's MEP, showed some British socialists just how deep the chasm has been between them and their natural comrades: it also showed that two vigorous politicians, with their way still to make, no longer saw the Community as a graveyard, but as an opportunity.

With each month that passes, those on the left who argue that we can best shape our futures through the Community (rather than, as the Powell-Benn axis had it, see our future ruined by it) have become more bold. Next week will see the publication of a Fabian pamphlet* written by David Martin, the young leader of the Labour Group in the Euro parliament. Of itself his election showed the way the wind was blowing, and his pamphlet, attracting an introduction from Kinnock, is as forthright a defence of the Community as we could expect from one who still has to temper enthusiasm with a few bent knees of his own in the direction of the conservative left. His first sentence — "The era of the nation state and of national roads to socialism is drawing close in Europe" — makes it clear that Martin, with a growing constituency behind him, is prepared to work within a framework of political thought and action which until now the left has not been able to assume.

The next four or five years should see a profound debate in Brussels, Strasbourg and all the nation states: a debate which will centre on the internal market reforms, but which will — or should — include the fundamental changes to our politics and culture which this latest, and very great, leap into integration will presage. The horse trading of the Commission and the Strasbourg parliament is designed to allow oppositional forces to take far more tricks than are available in the parliamentary dictatorship which first-past-the-post enforces upon us. It will be our own fault if we do not do so. □

**Bringing Commonsense to the Common Market — a left agenda for Europe* by David Martin, Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN, £2.

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. . . and disagree

"EUROPE" has suddenly become an "in" question in the labour movement. A few years ago the only people to "talk European" were the unabashedly pro-Common Market, pro-Nato Labour right. The handful of socialists who rejected both the Common Market orthodoxies of the right and the little Englanderism which infected left attitudes towards Europe were marginal.

On the surface this is changing. Neil Kinnock has made speeches about recognising the "irrelevence" of any commitment by Labour to British withdrawal from the European Community. Other figures in and around the Labour establishment — including John Lloyd (opposite) — urge us not only to accept the EC and the Treaty of Rome, but even sing the praises of the forthcoming completion of the EC internal market, involving as it does the wholesale removal of all remaining physical, fiscal and other barriers to the free movement of trade and capital.

Some of what is masquerading as a concern with European socialist strategy is little more than an accommodation to the status quo in the EC: a mixture of opportunism and utopianism which cannot lay the basis for a politics capable of confronting and taming, let alone replacing, the increasingly centralised power of capital in Europe.

Of course, a debate on the British left about Europe is long overdue. For decades past, the labour movement has deployed the cast-off arguments of the Tories (complete with references to national sovereignty, Britain's special relationship with the United States and a cloying nostalgia for commonwealth and Empire) in seeking a popular basis for opposition to the EC.

Of course, the Rome Treaty and some established EEC policies are hostile to the aspirations of even moderately reforming governments. This is particularly true in the area of control of trade and capital. But when it comes to equal opportunities, workers' rights and some aspects of social and economic policy, the Commission, the European Court and the European Parliament have taken positions well "to the left" of successive British governments.

The Common Agricultural Policy has created costly and unwanted food surpluses and so has contributed to the destruction of third world agriculture. But even here the British left mistakenly believes that the cause of overproduction and waste is continental peasant farming. In fact, the CAP has served the interests of agricultural big business, has encouraged environmentally damaging industrial farming techniques and has impoverished small farmers and their communities. The left should champion the cause of the small farmers and their communities on economic, ecological and social grounds.

After the EEC summit circus last week, Mrs Thatcher is fair game for her *volte face* over reform of the budget and the CAP. The contrast between her unbending rhetoric on increased spending and the pliant realities of the final summit compromise are obvious to all.

But the fact that agriculture accounts for two thirds of the total EC budget is not only eloquent testimony to a juggernaut out of financial control, it also reflects the miserable level of public spending by the EC, and particularly expenditure on economic, industrial, social and technological policies. In these and other areas, the need is for a far bigger European budget. Even the 80 per cent rise in "structural expenditure" to tackle unemployment and regional backwardness, agreed at the Brussels summit, is a flea-bite given the scale of the economic, industrial and social problems in many areas of Britain and the European Community. That's the message Labour should have been putting across.

With some kind of reform of the CAP now agreed, the agenda of the predominantly right-wing EC governments has been cleared to push through the completion of the European "internal market". There are two dangers for the left in coming to grips with the internal market.

JOHN PALMER *agrees — but argues that we must first change the EC*

The first is to underestimate the threat de-regulation and transnational "liberalisation" will present to the limited powers of local, regional and national authorities concerned to defend developmental, employment or equal opportunities objectives against the priorities of an unrestrained free market.

Radical reform Strategy

Some of these issues are explored by the leader of the British Labour group in the European Parliament in a Fabian pamphlet (details opposite). In it David Martin discusses some of the elements which could form part of a radical reform strategy in the EC. He tackles head on the demand for far greater democratic control of the often hidden and, in practice, unaccountable decisions of the EC institutions (above all, the Council of Ministers). That, he recognises, first and foremost means giving real powers to the expensive but virtually toothless European Parliament.

Welcome though this is as a contribution to the debate on a socialist strategy, it should not encourage illusions about the challenge which any serious left government would face if it tried to pursue policies in defence of jobs or economic development which ran counter to the provisions of the Rome Treaty.

But isolated left governments finding themselves in such a crisis cannot hope to defeat EC obstruction on their own. This will only be possible through the mobilisation of a movement of solidarity, involving the European labour movement and other sympathetic governments. Such solidarity is not built overnight or through essentially nationalist policies, such as EC withdrawal.

Rather it is built for in the here and now through the development of common programmes of struggle with the European left and the labour movement. These include the fight for jobs, for the 35-hour week, and against the danger of "European" nuclear security strategy. The European left cannot defend gains made, whether unilateral or multilateral arms reductions, while fudging the issue of the cold-war military alliances such as NATO and the need for European non-alignment in foreign and security policy. The speed of the Labour Party's move to the right on Trident and nuclear arms in general is frightening proof of the need for defence and foreign policy to be internally consistent.

It is also not going to be enough merely to limit collective action to immediate issues involving the defence of jobs and conditions. The left must also start fleshing out its ideas for new forms of public ownership and democratic planning at a European level to complement intervention at national, regional and local levels. Without European-level intervention, the sheer strength and mobility of international finance capital and multinational companies will outgun governments relying on a purely national armoury of controls. Support already exists in parts of the European trade union movement for policies such as socially useful production, popular planning and industrial democracy.

It should go without saying that "European" strategy should mean just that. There is nothing sacrosanct about an EC of twelve nations, especially when the governments of both EFTA western European states and Comecon eastern European states are attempting to negotiate far closer links with the EEC. Europe stretches from the Atlantic to the Urals - and that means no equivocation about support for freedom as well as peace in eastern Europe.

Far from accommodating to any "Euro-centrism", the European left must learn to use Europe as the forum for its international solidarity work. (As one black South African miner said to me not long ago, "You are in the EEC: use it to ban South African coal imports!")

In all of this there is a role for socialists to work within EC institutions such as the European Parliament, to help build a grassroots transnational movement of socialists, feminists, ecologists, communtiy and peace activity and trade unionists. But clear-headedness about the limitations of both the EC and its institutions and existing national state machines will be essential if that movement is to become a force to be reckoned with in the 1990s.

John Palmer is author of the recently published 'Europe without America', Oxford University Press.

NEW STATESMAN BINDERS

We apologise to readers who are waiting to receive *New Statesman binders they ordered some time ago. The delay has been caused by manufacturing problems at our suppliers. All orders will be despatched as soon as new stocks reach us — no later, we hope, than mid-March.*

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SHARPEVILLE SIX

Who will sing for Theresa Ramashamola?

On Pretoria's death row, six black South Africans are waiting to hang for a crime which even the appeal court admits they probably didn't commit. Any day now, they may receive official letters which begin with the salutation "Greetings" and give them only 48 hours to live. As the international campaign to save them is stepped up, South African writer* HILDA BERNSTEIN *reports on the case of the Sharpeville Six

IDAF

Theresa Ramashamola: the first woman in South Africa to receive the death sentence for political activity

FOR THREE YEARS Julia Ramashamola has known that her daughter, Theresa, is going to die. Theresa, with five others, was sentenced to hang for the murder of Khuzwayo Dlamini, a local councillor in the township of Sharpeville. Theresa and the five young men are known as the Sharpeville Six. She is the first woman in South Africa to receive the death sentence for activities that have their roots in the political turmoil of these times.

The Sharpeville Six were among thousands of people caught up in explosive events three years ago in the Vaal Triangle, a densely populated area of black dormitory townships separated from, but serving, South Africa's white industrial heartlands. Trouble flared when local councillors raised rents, having already increased them by 427 per cent in the past seven years. The councillors, notoriously corrupt and under the domination of white Development Boards, had been consistently rejected by the residents of the Vaal Triangle. Residents organised a protest march which was attacked by the police. On that day 14 people died and 250 were injured. Ten of the dead were killed by the police on their own admission. Dlamini was one of two councillors who were killed by the people, after he had shot into the crowds. He was stoned, and his house and car were burned.

In the days that followed the Vaal became a battlefield where armed police and units of the South African Defence Force violently suppressed the people's anger. 150 more died in less than two months; of these, only 8 were known to have been killed by persons other than the police and armed forces.

Two months after Dlamini's death police came at night to the house where Theresa lived with her mother and two younger sisters, and took her away in her nightgown. At the police station she dressed in the clothes her mother had pressed into her hands before she left, but she was made to strip to her pants, and was then tortured by electric shocks to her breasts. Some days later her arm was broken while she was in a police van; it was three days before she was taken to a hospital to have it set.

Those detained that night for their alleged association with Dlamini's death were held first under the Internal Security Act. This initial period of detention is essential in political trials as it provides the police with unrestricted and unmonitored access to those arrested. They are held in solitary confinement and allowed no visits from family or friends, and are forbidden to see a lawyer. They are totally at the mercy of the security police.

The trial that began on 23 September 1985 involved two main charges: the common law offence of murder and the statutory crime of subversion. There were two additional charges, of malicious damage to property and arson.

The main evidence against the Sharpeville Six rested on the testimony of two state witnesses, Mr X and Mr Y, who had also been detained and held *incommunicado,* and who gave their evidence *in camera.* Witnesses who are detained for this purpose may go to jail for five years if they refuse to testify; and, if their evidence in court differs from statements made previously to the police, they are charged with perjury. The witness must therefore weigh up whatever moral scruples he may feel against the prospect of himself becoming the victim.

One of the witnesses however, Mr Y, revealed that he had been assaulted by several policemen; and there were contradictions in his evidence. He had also told another prisoner that he did not know who killed Dlamini.

Among the evidence presented by the accused was the fact that Theresa had been hit on the head by a rubber bullet before Dlamini's death; she said that she had then gone home. Another of the accused stated he was at home with a football injury on the day of the death. A third gave evidence of severe beatings in which his jaw was broken, and of torture by electric shock — the extent and severity of his injuries was confirmed by a District Surgeon who had examined him.

Despite calls for clemency from the governments of the US, Canada, Japan, Australia, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland and the countries of the EEC, the verdict and the death sentence have now been upheld by the appeal court in Bloemfontein. This is in spite of the fact that the judge accepted that no causal connection had been established between the death of the murdered man and at least two of the accused, Mokoena and Ramashamola. He then went even further, saying: "I shall therefore assume, for the purposes of my judgment, that it has not been proved in the case of any of the six accused convicted of murder that their conduct has contributed causally to the death of the deceased."

The trial and conviction of the Sharpeville Six and the rejection of their appeal by the supreme court cannot be understood except in the context of the continuing struggles — protests, rent boycotts and other actions — in the Vaal Triangle; and of the continuing state of emergency of the past two years. Theresa and her co-accused were on trial as part of the process of subduing a continuing struggle against the apartheid regime. They are just one group out of hundreds in political trials that take place continuously throughout South Africa. Some of them are publicised because of the comparative importance of those on trial, or the sheer length of the trial; most never reach the press.

South Africa probably holds the record for death by hanging. Last year 167 men were officially put to death in this way. Many of them died because of their participation in essentially political acts — acts in which there was no intent of personal gain, no motive other than the desire to rid the country of apartheid. Others were convicted of 'ordinary' criminal acts. The vast majority of those who face the death penalty are black, almost invariably male.

But in the case of Theresa Ramashamola there is a further dimension. For if there is anything that women in the many countries of the world have learned during these recent decades it is the strength and power of the feminine network, the system of support that enables women in situations of hardship, of deprivation, of suffering and loneliness, to survive. In Theresa's case, her very singleness makes it more poignant. They say she has been on 'death row' for three years. There is a death row in the high security men's prison in Pretoria, and always a number of men awaiting the date of their execution. But Theresa is by herself in the women's section, there is no constant flow of condemned women, no one to sing for her as the men sing for those who are to hang, no support system from other prisoners as there is for the men.

We cannot know the details, whether they will take Theresa to the men's section on the night before her execution, whether she will go to the scaffold alone or together with the other five (they hang up to seven at a time in Pretoria). Or will there be sufficient voices of protest, of appeal, of anger, of demand, from women and men everywhere that will still — at this late time — save the Sharpeville Six from death by hanging? □

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Will God join the Tories?

Conservatives are turning to religion to make up for the failings of their politics.* SARAH BENTON *looks at the contradictory pressures on the clergy

GOD, OR AT LEAST his representatives on earth, have made a surprise reappearance on the centre stage of British politics. Her Majesty's ministers argue among themselves on the proper conduct of bishops and what God would wish them to do about crime, homosexuality and abortion. Mrs Thatcher has them round to deplore the nation's morals. The bishops, communing alternately with God, the Prime Minister and the laity, hover uncertainly between the hard rocks of moral absolutism and the quagmires of loving tolerances. The Chief Rabbi, safe in his knighthood and separation of synagogue from state, knows for sure that his God is against homosexuality, abortion and sexual laxity. This God, at least, he has in common with the Pope.

When politics is about economics and class there is no call for God. When, as now, morals and sexuality in particular become the focus of political discussion, the politicians hesitate and demand that religion provides them with the arguments they want. This is peculiarly necessary for a government which has trumpeted the narrow limits of the powers of government and state and proclaimed the freedom of the individual. A government which can't run a gas industry clearly has no power to run the nation's sex lives.

The language of the debate is curious, with a disturbing dependence on a cultivated paranoia. Conservative politicians are having to decry the moral state of a society which has been in their charge for the last nine years. They must champion the popular discontent at a perceived lack of order while proclaiming the new order which they have achieved. New threats to the social order must be continuously discovered in order to fuel the counter-reformation.

By definition, such threats must originate outside the political society they control (else what have they been doing for the last nine years?) and what better place to find them than in the machinations of leftists in the murky civil disorder of sex and family life?

This government could have firmly quelled the reaction against local policies on gay or black rights by saying either that local electors had a right to decide, or that such policies were no more than good practice in a democratic capitalist state. It has preferred to encourage the reaction as evidence that the forces of disorder are still at work in the undergrowth. But because this is Thatcherism, with those proclaimed limits to the powers of state and government, non-governmental forces must be drummed up to fight the new threats.

Unlike the fretfully pious John Selwyn Gummer, who has the fundamentalist fixation with women, sex and God's word, Douglas Hurd is only interested in the Church as an institution for social discipline. We are a long way from Disraeli's two nations, he told Synod last week. "On the contrary, there has been, over the past decade, an exceptional increase in the prosperity of the great majority of the British people." Yet there is still an inexplicably ugly sore on this newly prosperous, healthy body: the behaviour of the people. This is the absence of "social cohesion" (a condition, Hurd reprovingly informed the Church, which is "incompatible" with social equality). To achieve this, individuals must change, and "Conservatives are clear that government alone cannot undertake this task."

Faced with the temporal limits of politics in making us worthy of this better world, the government turns to the unarguable truths of God and tradition; for if Mrs Thatcher is the arbiter of the new, God is the guardian of the past. What is frightening the ministers of the New World is the possibility that it is breaking up the old social foundations.

> ***"The ambitious politicians of Thatcherism hold firm their right to fornicate outside marriage and swap old partners for new"***

The government, anxious to recruit the Church to re-establish a cohesive national morality, has two enemies to fight. One is clearly seen, the all-too-secular liberal Anglicans who talk of love and justice when they should be driving home the virtuous rule of patriotism, social discipline and family order. The Church of England, in *Faith in the City*, stated there were things the government could do to improve the predicament of the poor — in the name of the morality of social justice and cohesion. The Church has prevaricated over just how sinful God finds homosexuality.

Now, dithering in their vicarages, they might possibly find something not too moral about, say, the government's actions over the RUC, the health service, the social security bill. They must be firmly directed away from questions of social justice onto the course of proving that social disorder is a product of parental irresponsibility. (Though why Conservatives think respect for parents is the same as respect for a society of strangers, why filial and civic duty are the same thing, is very odd. The Kray brothers were devoted to their old mum.) Anyway, if the government shows no respect for its fellow citizens on abandoned estates, why should the young? Liberal clergy must stop giving notice to such thoughts.

Hidden dangers

The other danger is more hidden, the religious zealots of all denominations who, scenting weakness in the tired old political authority, assert the paramount authority of God's law. Might they become an influence on those ordinary people who voted Conservative to reassert traditional rules over socialism's anarchy? This is dangerous ground, and morality is a volatile political force, as Transport Minister Peter Thorneycroft seemed to recognise last week. In some embarrassment, he spoke against colleague Gummer's view that the bishops should discuss public affairs only in the words of God. How can sensible men manage the political world in the language of God? James Anderton only began to speak this tongue when he recognised his chances of joining the political elite were zilch. Religious enthusiasm can also overthrow political order.

This government, like any other, governs through amoral, political aims. Practical problems, like Aids or child abuse, cannot be met with moral assertions about the sanctity of family life. The ambitious politicians of Thatcherism hold firm their right to fornicate outside marriage and exchange old marriage partners for new. Twice-married Douglas Hurd is not thinking of God's commandment against adultery, nor of the vows of life-long fidelity made before God when he deplores the state of a nation oblivious to the Old and New Testament teachings. When he extols the nation's prosperity he does not want to be reminded of a Christian tradition of extolling poverty, of Jesus's standard of living. The economy of the New World can hardly thrive under an ethic of asceticism and self-denial.

Nor can the commanding ethic of the New World's economy be one which puts the harmonious family and community first. When cohesive communities have cried that they will be destroyed by the closure of pit or steel works, ministers have said: the market must rule. The market demands that families loose their ties to permit mobility, that mothers go out to work to supply the demand for low-paid flexible labour. When Lord Young or Mr Moore consider social security payments to the young unemployed, they are not shaping the rules to ensure the best possible relations between parents and children. When government diminishes the factory inspectorate, it is not the morality or even legality of employing the children of the poor they have in mind. The state subsidy for housing is switched from council tenants with no savings to the "thrifty" buying their own homes, and consolidating their wealth, while estates fall into dereliction and despair.

These are the necessary conditions of the New World. But can society stand the strain? Too many of the people to whom Conversatives must listen have said not. Some appeal, successfully, for greater state authoritarianism. Others might be seduced by old Labour, with its emphasis on the state that cares. Either way, at this particular point in Thatcher's counter-reformation, the government needs to marshall the groundswell of anxiety about the state of the nation and lead it firmly from a focus on government action onto the need for civil society to reform itself. As Brecht proposed: "Would it not be easier in that case for the government to dissolve the people and elect another?" □

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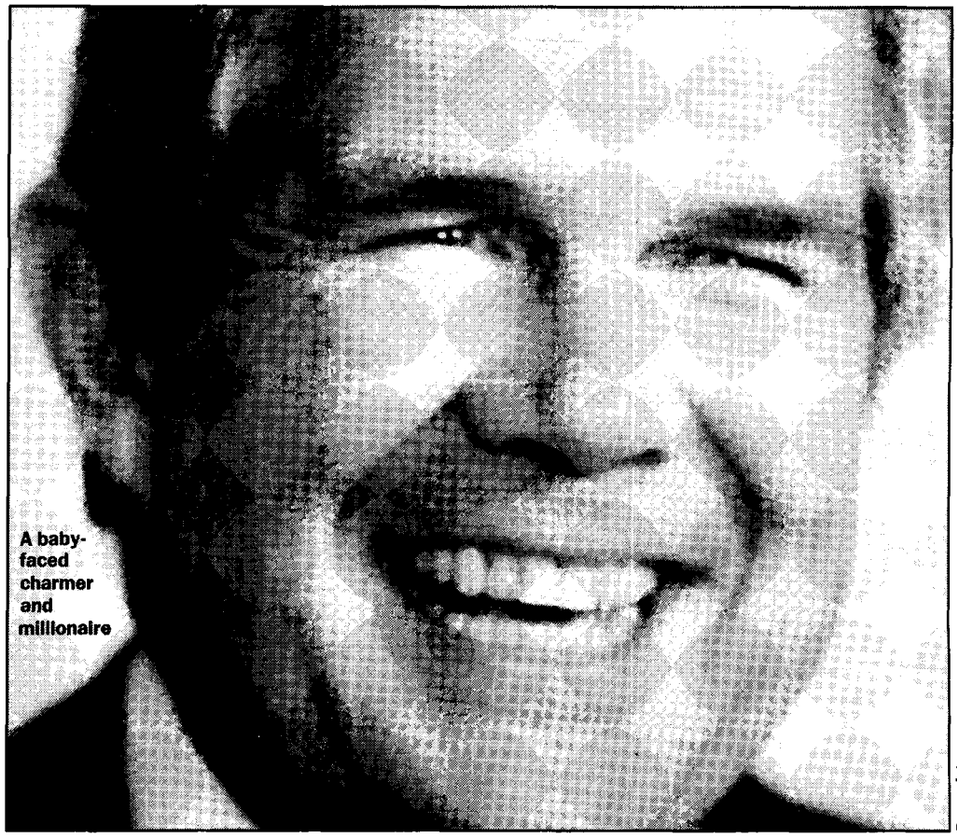
God's own candidate

Eighteen months ago, when a hurricane was "miraculously diverted" from the path of his Virginia Reach headquarters, the Rev. Pat Robertson took it as God's sign that he should run for the White House. Until last week, when Robertson came second above Vice-President George Bush in Iowa, no one was taking him seriously.* MARTIN WROE *met God's candidate in his home territory and found out his views on Aids, communists and homosexuals



A baby-faced charmer and millionaire

Popperfoto

"GOD HAS INSTANTLY healed you," declares the presidential hopeful to the faceless cancer victim on the other end of the telephone. It wouldn't work in a fictional sitting but this is real-life present-day America and four million viewers of the 700 Club watch with satisfaction as Pat Robertson, the world's most successful religious broadcasting entrepreneur turned presidential candidate, undertakes his "gift of healing" on prime time TV.

Robertson, 57, who founded his $230m Christian Broadcasting Network — CBN — in 1957 with $70 in cash and a vision of "claiming a defunct TV station for Jesus", takes another call. This time it is a homesexual with the Aids virus who thanks Pat for taking his heavy burden on his broad shoulders and laying it at the Throne of Grace when he called the show two days ago. Since that desperate call, and since Pat prayed for his condition, he is convinced that God has healed him of Aids. Robertson, who until God told him to run for President presented the 700 Club — a magazine show of "inspiration and information" — daily, is jubilant. He urgently orders one of his producers to get on a plane to the caller with cameras right away.

"We must meet this person and have him on the show. This would be a first in American history."

Pat Robertson knows the value of the camera, as long as it is being operated by his own side. He isn't so keen when the other side — like "the liberal American media" — get hold of it and drag out footage from his "ecstatic religion" days caught up in faith-healing mode ("Your gums are healed . . . take of that truss . . . ") before fervent fundamentalist audiences.

Robertson is on a divine mission to make America great again by restoring its moral values. "The problem with the United States today," he explains, "is evident, I think, in ten million cases of VD, in our rising crime rate, in that we take 60 per cent of the world's illegal drugs, that our alcoholism rate is second only to that of France, and 20 times that of Israel, in that we have 7 times more teenage pregnancies than they do per capita in Sweden . . . these are all the symptoms of a lack of self-control, a lack of moral control."

Tall, baby-faced and very charming, Pat Robertson is sitting in the modern block of offices which houses his "Robertson in '88" campaign headquarters in wealthy Virginia. Five minutes walk around the corner are his 4,000 employees at CBN and 1,000 graduate students at his own university.

No slouch

Being a preacher his analysis is fundamentally a moral one, but as a graduate of the Yale Law School he is no slouch when it comes to social, economic and political factors. Cultural relativism is the real problem, he argues, the notion that there are no absolutes, that anything goes. "If it feels good do it. That's this philosophy of hedonism and it will lead to moral bankruptcy. There is a tremendous vein of moral goodness in the US which is struggling with the hedonism, the sensuality, the desire for instant gratification. These two go hand in hand, side by side. It's a question of who is going to win."

The estimated 35 million Americans who subscribe to his 24-hour-a-day religious and family viewing cable station won't hinder his own bid to be the winner. They were the high platform of militantly right-wing religious support from which he leaped on Bush and into the headlines last week. America's fundamentalist Christians were the "invisible army" of new voters which confounded the critics and immediately had the commentators mumbling embarrassed phrases like "unelectable" — only previously reserved for black Democratic challenger Jesse Jackson.

Robertson is in touch with a key strata of contemporary American society — 4 million of them ring his 4,500 CBN volunteers manning telephone banks in 60 counselling centres across the US each year. He has long been one of the brightest jewels in the gaudy crown of the electronic church, a huge television congregation with presenters playing priests. Thirteen million Americans watch Christian TV daily, a third of them fans of Robertson's 700 Club. His highly conservative political stance — Robertson is a direct descendant of two US presidents and son of a US senator — is only the most public amongst the TV Evangelists who as well as commanding huge audiences and soliciting vast monies have since the turn of the decade swallowed right-wing politics hook, line and sinker. Inspired by Moral Majority founder Jerry Falwell, who has endorsed George Bush in the '88 campaign, the Pray-TV merchants have lost much credibility after last year's Pearlygate scandals. Robertson escaped mainly unscathed, describing it with a smile as "just the Lord doing a bit of house-cleaning".

He also fought off allegations of children outside marriage — before he came to faith he explained — and a disputed Korean war record. By September last year he had collected the signatures of three million Americans committed to supporting his bid for the presidency. It was his "fleece" from God that he should run for president.

It was a measure of his worldly wisdom that this

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Southern Baptist Minister immediately recruited advisers like Bob Slosser, former editor of the *New York Times* and Connie Snapp, a former vice president of a $3 billion Wall Street advertising agency. They turned him chameleon-like into "a television newscaster" or a "television broadcaster" . . . or a "religious broadcaster" . . . anything but a "television evangelist".

"I'm a broadcaster. We have the most popular basic cable network in the US. It's a disgrace the way the secular media describes me. It'd be obscene if you called every member of a football club a forward or a tackler."

Unlike other evangelists such as Jimmy Swaggert, Robertson has no fiery excesses on TV, coming across as "cool". He explains: "I've had 25 years experience before the camera. And the television, as Marshall McLuhan said, is a cool medium, a conversational medium. People who are nervous and aggressive don't do well but I have the ability to make complex issues simple so that people can understand them. It's not showmanship. It's teaching. The camera is my friend," he says, smiling.

As president, Robertson would set down such an example of moral goodness that the whole of America would follow suit. "The principal task of the president," he explains, quoting from Franklin Roosevelt, "is to give moral leadership and you can't put that into law because law is coercive. The true morality is spontaneous, brought about through intellectual and spiritual persuasion. But the president can set some kind of tone."

President Robertson's tone would not involve legislating a Christian morality on the American people because "that's contrary to the American tradition." One of the reasons for America's current moral quagmire is that a "religion" is already being imposed on the American nation — "secular humanism". It has been responsible for the abolition of prayer in schools, for state-funded abortion laws and for rampant feminism. "Little children are forbidden to say grace over their meals in the public school system of America. They are not permitted to say private prayer. That of course is a deprivation of freedom. If we cannot inculcate Judaeo-Christian values in the public arena, then we certainly should not inculcate atheism."

There would be exceptions to freedom under a President Robertson, happily married millionaire father-of-two — his autobiography recalls a tense period in his marriage before his wife, Dede, showed "willingness to submit herself to my spiritual headship". Robertson is not confident that a morally upright heterosexual president like himself would persuade by example the homosexual community to switch sexual orientation.

"I would be sure that the gay community did not have the constitutional rights to practice what I consider a perversion. The founding Fathers of America would have put them in jail. Virginia, my own state, has a law making sodomy a felony. It is abnormal, an offence against human nature . . . but I love them as people . . . at the 700 Club we have had a 70 per cent increase in calls from distressed homosexuals wanting spiritual counselling."

Robertson has exhorted his TV audience to support financial contributions for the Contras in Nicaragua — he is a good friend of Oliver North — the death penalty, Star Wars and nuclear armaments. All such causes are branded "Christian". The "foreign policy" of Jesus may have been to "love your enemies" but Robertson's is rather more worldly.

"The long-range goal of American foreign policy must be to see communism eliminated across the globe." But a President Robertson would not declare open war on unAmerican forces in Central America. "I think it's appropriate to supply any indigenous groups with arms to bring freedom. Otherwise freedom would be extinguished."

Implacably opposed to abortion on demand ("We are offering up one and a half million babies a year upon the altar of sensuality and selfishness"), Robertson is not so singlemindedly "pro-life" when the life belongs to a Nicaraguan or El Salvadorean or to difficult "enemy" leaders. The best solution to the "Libyan problem" would be "to kill Colonel Gadafy". He is not fooled by Russian *glasnost* either. "We have to realise that we are dealing with a malevolent power that in the past four decades has resulted in the death of 250 million human beings".

After his Iowa result last week, when 26,000 turned out from nowhere to vote for him, he said "I have a rocket on my back." The rocket may well be re-ignited when the polling moves to the South, where his television audience has been particularly strong. He could be an important power-broker in the presidential contest. He isn't surprised that commentators refuse to take his chances seriously. God, his closest political advisor, takes them seriously. "The people have been ready for a president who was a peanut farmer, and a president who was a movie actor, so why not one who is a religious broadcaster?" □

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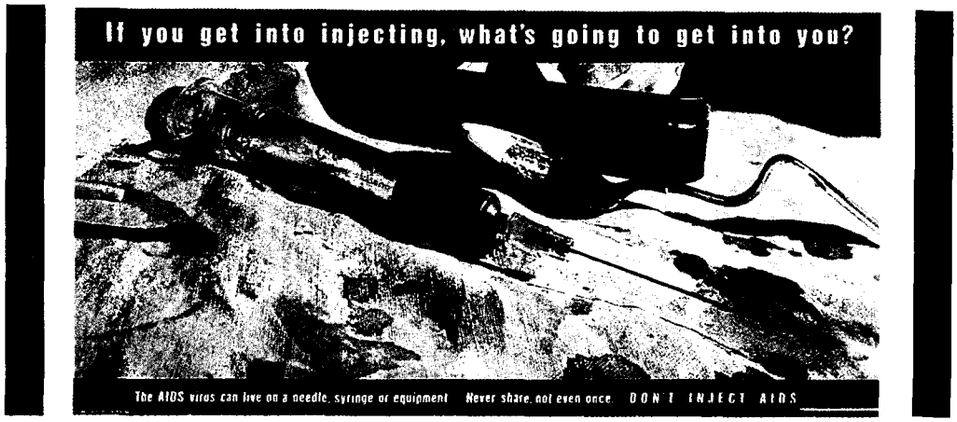
If you get into injecting, what's going to get into you?
The AIDS virus can live on a needle, syringe or equipment. Never share, not even once. DON'T INJECT AIDS.

Condor

WATER, DRILLS, grave-stones, concrete slabs, fences, needles: you name it, if it's got nothing to do with sex, then it gets bunged into Britain's Aids advertisements. So it comes as no surprise that, after campaigns which started off as horrendously vague ("Don't Die of Ignorance") and ended up just plain horrendous ("Don't Inject Aids, Smack isn't Worth it"), people are not actually persuaded of the necessity for safer sex. John Gummer has it wrong. Britain needs a condom culture.

Most people in Britain still perceive Aids as a threat only to gay men and intravenous drug-users — which is why the thrust of the new Health Education Council campaign is that *anyone* may have the HIV virus. But while it is deemed acceptable to sexualise any and every commodity or aspect of the news, or to pop into the local video shop to hire *Swedish Wife Exchange Club*, we still go all subliminal even under the imperative to talk about the HIV virus and how to practise safer sex.

Yes, I know, those first anti-Aids ads were supposed to trigger subconscious associations between sex and death, but even if you grasped that, you were still none the wiser about what to do, whether to do it, and how to do it.

Condomania did hit the TV screens, but for one week only. Some programmes were good, some were appalling, but at least most of us got the drift. What was needed at that point to stop us drifting off into condom fatigue were follow-up programmes and ads, with explicit information about safe sex, targeted at a wide range of specific groups. As any advertiser will tell you, it's no use launching a product if you don't keep plugging it, so that it stays fresh in people's minds. This just didn't happen.

Instead came the panic about the terrible statistics coming out of smack-infested cities, especially Edinburgh, and an overkill campaign which went right for the jugular. It must certainly have made the connection between heroin and Aids clear enough, but what it certainly could not do was to make a connection between what people do in bed and the disease.

The new campaigns try to be more explicit, but they are still tame and vague about sexual behaviour — inhibited, presumably, by a British fear of offending. Doubtless there are people like John Gummer who will be outraged by the idea that young people have sex at all — but that is *their* problem, while Aids is a problem which affects *everyone*.

This week, too, the publicity manager of Durex explained that their harmless telly ads had been thoroughly researched because "We did not want the type of image you have in France of a couple heaving in the back of a Deux Chevaux."

But why not? What is it about the British psyche that has to represent sex either as "bonking", Benny Hill and big tits, or as some kind of horror show complete with special effects, gore and tombstones. Our campaigns may be better than this advice to young people in the United States, "Teenagers should avoid Drugs and Sex", or, "Say no to sex until you are ready to enter into a mutually faithful, single partner relationship with an uninfected person." (Whoever wrote this stuff has obviously never been a human being, let alone a teenager.)

But the rest of European anti-Aids advertising looks positively jaunty alongside ours — though there, too, you can discern underlying national attitudes towards sexuality in the tone of the advertisements. Finland goes for primary colours and condoms pushing through the daisies under a child-like sun (see the cover). Norway opts for the Wicked Willy approach. The Danish poster could be an ad for Calvin Klein, and dares to be both erotic and stylish.

West Germany, on the other hand, plumps for the fidelity message, with a dark temptress luring a man away from his partner and Switzerland echoes this subtly misogynist line with another woman-as-threat image. The French and Belgians are both as vague and subliminal as Britain's past campaigns, while Italy uses a Madonna-and-child image ("An infant receives everything from its mother"). A bizarre Austrian poster is enough to put you off sex, or at least going to Austria.

If the British (and any other) government seriously wants to influence the behaviour of heterosexual people — young and old — then they should follow the admirable lead of the gay community which has financed ads, posters, films and books that promote the idea that safe sex is exciting as well as necessary. As long as ads link sex with fear, not pleasure, many people just switch off. As long as condoms are associated with cosiness, constraint and coupledom, men won't get into them and women won't make sure they do. We need a campaign which has the guts to give information about safe sex and the guile to fuel the sexual imagination.

It's time to rewrite a famous Woody Allen one-liner . . . Safe sex may not sound dirty, but if you're doing it right, it is. □

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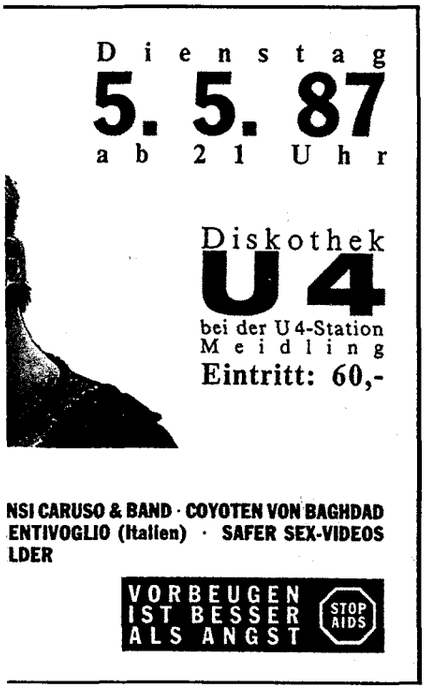
ı cultures

by SUZANNE MOORE



GERMANY

Be true to your own partner

Die Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung informiert

Urlaub von der Treue ist das Ende der Sicherheit.

Aids bekommt man nicht wie einen Schnupfen.
Anstecken kann man sich bei ungeschütztem Sex mit unbekannten Partnern.
Deshalb gilt im Urlaub, wie überall:

Partnerschaftliche Treue ist der beste Schutz vor Aids.
Wenn Sie noch Fragen haben, rufen Sie an:
02 21/89 20 31

GIB AIDS KEINE CHANCE

AUSTRIA

Enough to put you off sex

FRANCE

Vague and subliminal

DENMARK

As stylish and erotic as Calvin Klein

SEX ER DEJLIGT
– og det skulle det gerne blive ved med
Når du ved, hvordan AIDS smitter – og ikke smitter – kan du nemt undgå den frygtede sygdom.
Bruger du kondom ved samleje, behøver du ikke være bange for at få AIDS.
Beskyt dig – også mod ændres uvidenhed.

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Enforcing the Central American mode

NOAM CHOMSKY, ***the distinguished American linguist, is also his country's foremost moral dissenter. In this article he places the refusal by Congress to renew funding for the Contra forces in the historical perspective of the US government's ruthless pursuit of power and wealth in Central America. Washington's hawks and doves don't argue from moral positions, but simply disagree about the efficacy of economic warfare and state terrorism and murder in bringing nonconforming states to their knees***

AFTER THE REFUSAL of Congress to renew US government aid to the proxy Contra army in Nicaragua, a headline in the Managua newspaper *El Nueve Diario* read, "Peace Gains Points". The headline is accurate, as was the headline in the Sandinista press, "The US Will Evaluate New Forms of Aggression Today".

From the first moments of the peace accords last August, the Reagan administration had been preparing for this contingency. CIA flights increased to two to three daily to provide reserve stocks of arms and supplies. These flights will continue through February, probably at peak intensity. The illegal surveillance flights, which provide the US proxy forces with up-to-the-minute intelligence so that they can avoid military combat and attack "soft targets", are subject to no limits. (Contra lobbyists candidly describe the Contras in internal documents as a "proxy force", organised, trained, supplied and controlled by the CIA.)

Instead of "trying to duke it out with the Sandinistas directly", as explained by General John Galvin, commander of US Southern Command, the Contra proxies were under orders from Washington to concentrate on "soft targets", such as cooperatives, farms and health clinics which lack the means to defend themselves against armed terrorists. The goals were to improve the Contras' prospects and to refute the charge of Washington's establishment "doves" that the resort to violence "is a clear failure" and should be replaced by other measures to enforce a regional settlement upon Nicaragua, and upon Nicaragua alone; to compel Nicaragua to keep up its guard so that the media could denounce Sandinista totalitarianism; and to ensure the Contras sufficient supplies to continue the war in the event of a ban on official aid.

Note that, as tacitly conceded on all sides, the proxy forces bear no resemblance to guerrillas. By the standards of the region, they are a well-equipped mercenary army, maintained by overwhelming US power. They would collapse if US aid were withdrawn. The contrast to authentic guerrillas, as in El Salvador, is dramatic, but suppressed, in the interests of maintaining the Washington fiction of a "symmetry" between Nicaragua and El Salvador.

There is indeed a symmetry, though not the one put forth by Washington and its Free Press. In both countries there is a terrorist army, attacking "soft targets" and slaughtering civilians, and in both countries it is organised and maintained by the United States: the army of El Salvador, and the proxy army attacking Nicaragua from foreign bases.

One measure of Washington's success in contingency planning is that the contra forces, according to western military observers, can continue fighting for perhaps a year without new aid. Another is a Witness for Peace study, which passed virtually without notice, concluding that "Contra rebels have doubled their attacks on civilians" since August 1987. At least 25 more civilians were killed by the Contras as the House voted on 3 February.

Montage: Michael Bennett

At home, the government's ideological warfare included efforts to refashion the peace accords to fit its agenda — a task assigned to the Free Press. Particularly notable was the evasion of the severe violations of the accords by the US client states, and more crucially, the virtual suppression of information about the escalation of supply flights that undermined what the accords identify as the single "indispensable element" for peace: namely, an end to any form of support for "irregular forces (the Contras) or insurrectionary movements (indigenous guerrillas)".

These facts had to be suppressed, first, because they demonstrate that the US bears primary responsibility for sabotaging the accords; and second, because they undermine the pretence of a symmetry between El Salvador and Nicaragua. Instead, during the period of the demolition of the accords (August 1987-January 1988), the primary task was to focus them on Nicaragua so that the US clients could violate their terms with impunity; and to eliminate any verification apparatus so that these actions can continue. This goal was achieved, a major US government victory.

Regional standards

The US military attack against Nicaragua will no doubt continue, along with other measures to restore Nicaragua to the "Central American mode" and to compel it to adhere to "regional standards", as demanded by the *Washington Post* and other doves. Contra supporters and fund-raisers (Republican presidential candidate Robert Dole among them) announced that they would renew their efforts, reporting that they were "swamped by offers of money and support" after the congressional vote. The private and clandestine networks may be reactivated, to be exposed years hence with appropriate laments.

The task of the Free Press now is to deflect attention from the US government and its clients, while depicting every effort by Nicaragua to survive the continuing US attack as a violation of Ortega's promises, proving that communists cannot be trusted and preparing the ground for further steps to enforce "regional standards" in Central America.

Thus if the US government directs the Contra civilian front to block a ceasefire, that will prove that Ortega is uncompromising; the continued refusal of El Salvador and Guatemala to negotiate with authentic guerrillas will continue to pass without notice. If Nicaragua attempts to prevent

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its information system from being taken over by the US and its local clients, that will be offered as proof of their iniquity. And the same will be true of measures to sustain the economy that has been destroyed by US violence and economic warfare, or indeed any measures that differentiate Nicaragua from some Scandinavian democracy in times of peace.

Nicaragua has been unable to adopt measures standard in democratic states in times of crisis. I doubt that there exists a historical precedent for the phenomenon of *La Prensa*, a disinformation journal subsidised by the superpower attacking Nicaragua and openly supporting this attack.

One qualification. According to State Department doctrine, as a result of the failure to provide official aid to the Freedom Fighters, "the top priority issue" for the US clients will "shift from democratic development to renewed fear of security", with "resurgence of the military" now "inevitable", coups and repression likely (Elliott Abrams, Reagan's Undersecretary of State). This warning — a virtual authorisation of increased terror — was reiterated by General Fred Woerner, of the Southern Command, after the House vote. If state terror can be blamed on "communist subversion", originating from Nicaragua (Abrams), constraints on US media coverage of the client regimes might relax.

Ideological warfare

The most important diplomatic event of January was the report of the International Commission (CIVS) charged with monitoring compliance with the accords. It singled out the US government for condemnation because of its continued assistance "to the irregular forces operating against the government of Nicaragua", thus violating "an indispensable requirement for the success of the peace efforts and of this procedure as a whole." A CIVS official informed the press that Latin American representatives were "shocked by the attitudes of patent fear" expressed by trade unionists and opposition figures in El Salvador and Guatemala, adding that the CIVS could not provide details about compliance because of objections from Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala — indicating what the report would have said, had it not been blocked by the US and its clients.

These conclusions are obviously useless for ideological warfare. Correspondingly, the American press dismissed and belittled the report; and the Commission itself was disbanded under US pressure, as being too sympathetic to Nicaragua, granting to the US the privilege of pursuing its terrorist activities unhampered and permitting President Duarte of El Salvador to continue to serve as a front man for terror and murder.

Terror and repression in the client states escalated during the accords and continued through the final demolition. A few examples will illustrate. On the day of the House vote, judicial authorities in El Salvador confirmed the discovery of three bodies (two men and a teen-age boy) at a well-known dumping ground for the death squads. The bodies were found blindfolded with hands tied behind their backs and signs of torture. The nongovernmental Human Rights Commission (CDHES), which continues to function despite the assassination of its founders and directors, reported that 13 bodies had been found in the preceding two weeks, most showing signs of torture. Seven bullet-ridden bodies were found on 17 January on a ranch, including two women "who had been hanged from a tree by their hair"; "their breasts were cut off and their faces painted red," a CDHES spokesman reported, on condition of anonymity for fear of the death squads. The bodies of three tortured men were found on 25 January.

> ***"Terror and repression in the client states escalated during the accords. On the day of the House vote, the Human Rights Commission in El Salvador reported that 13 bodies had been found in the preceding two weeks, most showing signs of torture. Two women "had been hanged from a tree by their hair . . . Their breasts were cut off. . ."***

The Council on Hemispheric Affairs, in its Human Rights Review for 1987, once again named El Salvador as among the worst violators of human rights (along with Chile, Colombia, the Contras, and the Shining Path guerrillas in Peru) with Guatemala, Haiti, Peru and Paraguay "close behind".

In September, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the OAS issued a report noting a "perceptible decline in the observance of human rights" in Guatemala, expressing concern over "the resumption of methods and systems for eliminating persons in mass and the reappearance of the dreadful death squads". The Guatemalan Human Rights Commission reported 334 extra-judicial executions and 73 disappearances in the first nine months of 1987. An executive committee member, Toribio Pineda, visiting Washington, stated that "the accords are being used as a smoke screen and the human rights situation is becoming much graver . . . [The accords have served] to allow violations with much more impunity."

The Costa Rica-based Commission for the Defence of Human Rights in Central America informed the UN in November that in Guatemala "repressive action has continued with the usual characteristics" and documented some 175 cases of abductions, disappearances, and assassinations from 8 August to 17 November 1987 in addition to grenade attacks, a bomb thrown into a church, etc. Pineda reported that the documented cases represent only a fraction of the abuses, because most take place outside the capital (the same is reported in El Salvador).

In both countries, as in Honduras, the provisions of the accords calling for "justice, freedom and democracy" and guarantees for "the inviolability of all forms of life and liberty" and "the safety of the people" are a cynical mockery.

Meanwhile, James LeMoyne concluded in the *New York Times* that "American support for elected governments [meaning, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras] has been a relative success" (7 February). No doubt true, by some standards. Thus, in short, the three US client states remain safely within "the Central American mode", a matter of no concern since they have been exempted from the accords by US government fiat, with the tacit approval of the media and Congress.

THERE ARE persistent features of US policy, reflecting the stability of the domestic institutions from which it derives. A condition for entering the arena of respectable debate or participating in state management is adherence to this doctrinal framework. The basic principle internationally is that independent nationalism and development geared to domestic needs are unacceptable. Any deviation requires that discipline be imposed, either by force or in other ways. Thus the "doves" argue that since "the contra effort is woefully inadequate to achieve . . . democracy in Nicaragua", we should "isolate" the "reprehensible" government in Managua and "leave it to fester in its own juices" while blocking Sandinista efforts "to export violent revolution" (Senator Alan Cranston, February 1986). The US clients, in contrast, merit aid and support. They conform to the Central American mode of repression, exploitation, and rule by privileged elements that accede to the demands of US power ("democracy"), so even hideous atrocities are of no account.

Within this elite consensus, there is room for tactical debate. The choices range between the hard-line reliance on force and a soft-line preference for economic and other pressures. Thus one may oppose the Contras because the hard-line option is perceived to have failed (in reality, it succeeded in its major aim of reversing social reforms and development for domestic needs, thus preventing the feared demonstration effect regularly described as "exporting violent revolution"); and with the destruction of the Nicaraguan economy, the same policy goals can be pursued by less costly means. Or one may support the Contras on the grounds that violence may prove effective in enforcing "regional standards".

Policy goals

The basic policy goals are frankly spelled out in the internal record. Immediately after the US destroyed Guatemalan democracy in 1954, the National Security Council produced a Top Secret Memorandum, entitled "US Policy Toward Latin America". It opened by explaining that the major threat to US interests is "the trend in Latin America toward nationalistic regimes" that respond to "popular demand for immediate improvement in the low living standards of the masses" and for production geared to domestic needs. This is intolerable, because the US is committed to "encouraging a climate conducive to private investment," and must "encourage" the Latin American countries "to base their economies on a system of private enterprise, and, as essential thereto, to create a political and economic climate conducive to private investment of both domestic and foreign capital", including guarantees for the "opportunity to earn and, in the case of foreign capital, to repatriate a reasonable return".

The Latin American countries must concentrate on export-oriented production in accord with the needs of US investors. To facilitate these goals, so this and later documents explain forthrightly, it is necessary for the US to control the Latin

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American military, which has the responsibility to overthrow civilian governments that do not conform to US requirements (called "the welfare of the nation"). It is also necessary to overcome the excessive liberalism of Latin American governments, to block "subversion" (that is, the wrong ideas), and in general to bar any challenge to US domination. The US has no objection to democratic forms — indeed, these are useful for the purposes of population control at home — but only if conditions are established, by violence if necessary, to ensure that the threat of independent development, social reform and broad democratic participation has been overcome.

Ideas of this nature have been implemented since World War Two in order to maintain a world system subordinated to the needs of the US economy, or more accurately, its proprietors. It is hardly surprising that elite groups that dominate US political life should formulate and implement such global programmes, just as it is natural that awareness of all this should be suppressed in a well-functioning ideological system (ie, the Free Press).

Crucially, the evolving policy of US governments conforms generally to the directives outlined in internal documents. In particular, there is a good correlation between US aid and the investment climate in third world countries; and given the means required to safeguard the basic policy principles, we find that as a corollary US aid correlates with human rights violations. In Latin America, the leading academic specialist on the topic concluded from a revealing study that US aid "has tended to flow disproportionately to . . . the hemisphere's relatively egregious violators of fundamental human rights", to governments "which torture their citizens" (Lars Schoultz). Other studies have shown the same.

The tactical choices within this framework cannot be associated with particular individuals or groups. Thus Henry Kissinger was a dove with regard to China, where he agreed with Richard Nixon that the hard-line policy was unproductive and that other measures could draw China into the US-dominated global system. At the same time, he was a hawk in the Middle East. He supported Israel's refusal to accept a full-scale peace treaty offered by Egypt and Jordan in early 1971 and blocked State Department moves toward a diplomatic resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, establishing a policy that still prevails (and explains much of what is happening in that region today).

Hard and soft lines

We can learn a good deal by attention to the range of choices. Keeping just to Latin America, consider the efforts to eliminate the Allende regime in Chile. There were two parallel operations. Track II, the hard line, aimed at a military coup. This was concealed from Ambassador Edward Korry, a Kennedy liberal, whose task was to implement Track I, the soft line; in Korry's words, to "do all within our power to comdemn Chile and the Chileans to utmost deprivation and poverty, a policy designed for a long time to come to accelerate the hard features of a Communist society in Chile". The soft line was an extension of the long-term CIA effort to control Chilean democracy. One indication of its level is that in the 1964 election the CIA spent twice as much per Chilean voter to block Allende as the total spent per voter by both parties in the US elections of the same year.

The soft line and the hard line have been adopted by the same people, at the same time, as in Bolivia and Guatemala since 1949, revealing that the issues are tactical, involving no departure from shared principle. All of this provides insight into the nature of US policy, and the prevailing political culture.

> ***"In El Salvador, George Shultz declaimed, "the results are something all Americans can be proud of" – at least, all who enjoy the sight of tortured bodies, starving children, terror and generalised fear"***

Let us now turn to current US policies toward Central America, where there was a challenge to the persistent principles in the 1970s. In El Salvador, the US wasted little time in moving towards the hard line, and tactical debate terminated when it appeared that the slaughter conducted by the US mercenary army was achieving its goals. We should not overlook the success of these policies. Well after the 1984 elections that established "democracy" in El Salvador to the applause of the Free Press and responsible opinion generally, the human rights organisation Socorro Juridico observed that the continuing terror is still conducted by:

> the same members of the armed forces who enjoy official approval and are adequately trained to carry out these acts of collective suffering . . . Salvadoran society, affected by terror and panic, a result of the persistent violation of basic human rights, shows the following traits: collective intimidation and generalised fear, on the one hand, and on the other the internalised acceptance of the terror because of the daily and frequent use of violent means. In general, society accepts the frequent appearance of tortured bodies, because basic rights, the right to life, has absolutely no overriding value for society.

The last comment also applies to the society that oversees these operations, as underscored by George Shultz in one of his lamentations on terrorism (14 April 1986, a talk delivered at the very moment of the US terror bombing of Libya). In El Salvador, he declaimed, "the results are something all Americans can be proud of" — at least, all Americans who enjoy the sight of tortured bodies, starving children, terror and panic and generalised fear.

These observations on Salvadoran society under "democracy" were presented at the First International Seminar on Torture in Latin America at Buenos Aires in December 1985, a conference devoted to "the repressive system" that "has at its disposal knowledge and a multinational technology of terror, developed in specialised centres whose purpose is to perfect methods of exploitation, oppression and dependence of individuals and entire peoples" by the use of "state terrorism inspired by the doctrine of National Security", which can be traced to the historic decision of the Kennedy administration to shift the mission of the Latin American military to "internal security". The conference passed without notice in the civilised world — and, of course, none of this falls within the canon of terrorism as conceived there.

After a brief experiment with soft line measures to place privileged US-backed elements in power ("supporting democracy") in Nicaragua, the US turned to terror and economic warfare. An impediment to the normal policies was that the Nicaraguan military could not be converted into a subversive force in the usual fashion. Therefore it was necessary to construct a proxy army to attack Nicaragua from foreign bases, a variant of familiar programmes.

The sharp change in US policy towards Nicaragua is instructive. In the 1960s and 1970s, under Somoza's tyranny, Nicaragua was one of the highest per capita recipients of US economic aid in Latin America, because, as the AID mission explained in 1977, "US investment is welcomed in Nicaragua's developing free enterprise economy" and Somoza supports US policy objectives. Military assistance was high, to ensure that Somoza's National Guard could perform its functions.

Economic miracles

Under Carter, more economic aid went to Nicaragua than to any other Central American nation, in addition to other international aid. There was an "economic miracle", with a rapid rise in GNP — and in child malnutrition and general misery, given the nature of the development model. After Carter's early attempt to use aid as a lever to back "Nicaragua's forces of moderation" (ie, the pro-US private sector), aid terminated to be replaced by lethal economic warfare. The US government's policy shift coincides with a shift in Nicaragua from harsh repression and robbery of the poor to successful efforts to direct scarce resources to their needs. It is a striking feature of American political culture that the meaning of these facts cannot be understood.

The hard line today calls for military force, but this is increasingly a minority view. By 1986, the Contra option was opposed by 80 per cent of "leaders," the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations reports. The soft line calls for the resort to less violent measures now that US terror has succeeded in overcoming the threat of improvements in health and literacy and the "virus" of successful development that might, it was feared, have had a demonstration effect in a "revolution without borders". It is also anticipated that the social fabric has been sufficiently torn to shreds, and enough popular disaffection created, to add considerably to the massive problems of reconstruction, should the US military attack diminish. It is assumed that people will blame those in power for their suffering and all can see that it is because of the Sandinistas that the US persists in driving Nicaragua to ruin.

Apart from the military attack, US economic warfare has been highly effective in reversing development, undermining health and other social services, and wiping out private enterprise,

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unable to develop alternative sources of supply and markets that the government could sometimes find, though at severe cost. These consequenes also permit US journalists to deplore the "bitterness and apathy in Nicaragua" (James LeMoyne in the *New York Times*), attributing it to Sandinista mismanagement and repression.

The operative question for policy, then, is whether to persist with the hard line or, as the doves typically prefer, to ensure in other ways that Nicaragua will "fester in its own juices" in "utmost deprivation and poverty" until it sees the light.

Power makes the rules

There is no space to review here the remarkable campaign conducted by the US media, most notably the *New York Times*, to ensure that the accords would be dismantled. It succeeded. By mid-January, the Verification Commission was abolished, and Daniel Ortega, the Nicaraguan President, was compelled to go far beyond the accords, abandoning the simultaneity condition on which they were based. The "genius of the Arias plan," the *Times* editors then explained, "is that it provides a means for Nicaragua to accommodate to neighbours without appearing to truckle to Washington" (31 January), not the simultaneity requirement that had been so highly touted as the "genius" of the plan before the demolition job took effect.

Recognising that the powerful make the rules, Ortega agreed that Nicaragua alone would enact the provisions of the accords, even calling for an international commission to monitor Nicaragua's adherence alone. Headlines everywhere reported that Ortega now promises to "comply with" the accords — that is, the version fashioned in Washington, which bears little resemblance to the text — while warning that his promises plainly cannot be trusted. No one else's promises are relevant, now that the accords have been consigned to oblivion. The US clients are now exempt, and with no further international monitoring the US government is free to act as it wishes, subject to the controls of Congress and the Free Press, which have demonstrated their hawk-eyed vigilance so impressively in the past years.

After the House vote, James LeMoyne summarised what had been achieved. There is a "deeper problem" of facing the needed social changes in the region; a task to which the US is now dedicated, having recognised the earlier error of its ways — the familiar "change of course". But that apart, "the main problem remains Nicaragua's Sandinista government" and the prospects that it may "not comply with the peace treaty", which now gives "the last chance for moderating the course of the Nicaraguan revolution".

It nevertheless remains true that "Peace Gains Points." Long-term factors are pressing the US government towards the position of the doves. In the coming years, it will be necessary to pay the costs of Reaganite follies. His economic managers have left a shambles that will require a degree of austerity for less-privileged sectors of the population. A concomitant effect is that it will not be easy to terrify the population with demons to induce them to tighten their belts even further as the state subsidises the rich and undertakes violence and subversion abroad. We already see the signs. Suddenly, the Russians are less threatening and international terrorism is less of a threat. The statesmanlike approach is now mandatory, with summitry and arms negotiations. The doves are in the ascendance, not primarily because the world is all that different, but because domestic constraints have changed.

Furthermore, popular dissidence is a growing force, imposing costs that state planners cannot overlook. The courage of people resisting US dictates in Central America has been astonishing, and in Latin America generally there are signs of independence — the major reason why the US government so bitterly opposed the Contadora agreements, the International Verification Commission, indeed the involvement of any elements not under adequate control.

These are significant factors, but in the short run they might still be overcome, leading to a renewal of congressionally-mandated violence. The hawks can take the high moral ground, espousing "freedom" and "democracy". The official doves, who do not question the basic doctrines of the state, can only counter that they agree, but are unwilling to pay the costs, a weak position when it comes to the crunch. Deeper tendencies run in a different direction, but it is far from clear that they will be manifested in time to save the people of Central America from further terror and misery at our hands. □

Noam Chomsky's 'The Culture of Terrorism' (Pluto, £25 and £8.95) and 'The Chomsky Reader' (Serpents Tail, £9.95) are both published in Britain in March.

A VIEW FROM THE WEST

Lying in the corporate press

The New York Times and Washington Post — and main television networks — consciously act as mediating institutions for the US corporate state.

ALEXANDER COCKBURN ***reports on a new challenge to their complicity***

Los Angeles

THE *WASHINGTON POST* headline on the front of its foreign news section had a certain familiarity on the morning of 4 February: "Combat performance of Contras said to improve". Nothing new here, since the *Post*'s man in Central America, William Brannigin, has been regularly remitting exhilarated accounts of contra military prowess, usually accumulated after a tour in the "combat areas" with a Contra PR team.

None of the gullible reporters recruited to these mostly tranquil sorties ever seem to realise — or at least convey to their readers — the simple fact that their own presence is infinitely the most important part of the Contra mission. The former Contra leader Edgar Chamorro recently described in an entertaining monograph how these propaganda expeditions usually confined themselves prudently to southern Honduras, since men like Brannigin had no way of telling whether Nicaraguan territory had actually been penetrated, beyond carefully contrived messages bursting from the radio.

The jarring element on the *Post*'s 4 February story was the photograph right next to the report of Contra valour. It showed two old peasants flanking the tiny coffin of a Nicaraguan child killed in a Contra raid which had achieved the deaths of seven civilians. The bleak contrast of headline and image ultimately proved too much for *Post* editors who cleaned things up in time for the late edition.

For me the interest of the episode was the fact that the moral instincts of the *Washington Post*'s editors had been sufficiently debased for them to be blind to the awful irony of what they were actually printing until finally some slightly less hardened soul pointed it out. It indicates the fundamental success of US government propaganda in prompting reflexive corroboration of its world view in the country's two most important newspapers, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*.

Over at the *New York Times* things have been just as bad, if not worse. A couple of weeks ago I gave an example of that newspaper's scandalous misrepresentation of the consequences of the Guatemala accords or Arias plan. The accords stressed simultaneous compliance by all five countries in the Central American region. In the 90-day period after signature of the accords on 7 August, the ratio of *New York Times* coverage of Nicaragua was five times that of El Salvador, 22 times that of Honduras and 26 times that of Guatemala — all this in a period when human rights abuses and death squad activity were significantly on the increase in the latter three countries.

Another striking index of partiality has been the treatment of *La Prensa*, supposedly a beacon of the human spirit menaced by totalitarianism. It would be useful if Nicaragua's critics could find another instance in which a nation under armed attack and imminent terror of invasion has tolerated the publication of a newspaper urging such attack and subsidised by its chief aggressor. In the past few years over 60 articles in the *New*

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York Times have dealt with the travails of *La Prensa*. In the early 1980s the Salvadoran military's violent extermination of El Salvador's two independent dailies, *La Cronica* and *El Independiente* (the editor of one was disembowelled and the other fled the country) merited only three references. The *Times* has been similarly restrained in mentioning that 65 journalists in El Salvador and Guatemala have been murdered in recent years, or in making any comparison in regional compliance with the Guatemalan accords' call for "freedom of the press".

The essential point here is that during the entire period of its attempts to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, the Reagan administration has been underpinned in its operating assumptions by the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* newspapers, by the three major networks and by the Public Broadcasting System. Nor has this servility been confined to the Central American theatre. Similar indulgence has been available to Reagan and his accomplices in such areas as arms control, and — particularly in Reagan's first term — the arms build up; such well-known propaganda enterprises as "yellow rain", the Ali Agca affair and the downing of KAL 007. (A House Intelligence Committee recently released documents establishing conclusively that the Reagan administration had known very well through intercepts that the Soviets thought they had shot down a US military spy plane, though the US press was told the opposite and printed the White House press release without demur.)

There's nothing new about lying in the corporate press, but the peculiarly abysmal record over the past ten or twelve years — since the state's reconsolidation process began in the mid-70s after withdrawal from Vietnam — has at last began to stir vocal and organised opposition.

Drawing lines

On 30 January a new group called FAIR (Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting) organised a one-day conference in Los Angeles on the topic of democracy, the mass media and foreign reporting. FAIR is explicitly an effort to organise the countervailing pressure against the rather successful intrigues of the right-wing AIM (Accuracy in Media), whose rabid leader, Reed Irvine, has received respectful attention in the corporate offices of the *New York Times* and CBS.

The panels at FAIR's conference took people through familiar terrain: the press's bias and mission in the major theatres of concern — none more germane than Central America and the Middle East. One point became clear to me: that just as one can draw a line between the mainstream press — corporate, state-influenced — and the alternative media, most crucially, progressive FM radio and — largely unrealised in promise — public access cable; so too can one draw a less drastic but significant line between the prime regulatory media, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and the three major networks, and the media of the second tier, which include the television channel CNN started by the Atlanta entrepreneur Ted Turner, the *Los Angeles Times* (part of *Times Mirror* which is the richest media corporation in the United States) or the *Miami Herald*, part of the media chain, Knight Ridder.

A few days' study of the *Los Angeles Times* makes it speedily clear that in most areas its coverage is far superior in terms of breadth and precision to that of the two major east coast papers.

> ***'NBC is owned by General Electric, the country's second largest military contractor, second largest vendor of nuclear power, third biggest builder of nuclear weapons systems'***

Now it is true that for many years, until his retirement from the position last year, A.M. Rosenthal was executive editor of the *New York Times* and used his authority to eviscerate liberal rationality as best he could from the paper's pages. His heritage still lies across the intellectually corrupted and morally abject equerries he raised under his aegis. But the shadow of one individual, however lengthened, cannot account for that newspaper's present role, any more than can the personal trajectory of Katherine Graham and of her *consigliere*, editorial page editor Meg Greenfield, account for the *Post*'s conservative posture — which is light years from conservative fantasies about "ultra-liberal" Watergate crusaders. The root causes must be found in the self-perceived role of the *Post* and *New York Times* as mediating institutions of the corporate state, as expressing that state's interests as presently construed in the decayed paradigms of the east coast elites.

The TV networks are all run from New York, where the relevant executives get the same vision from the two newspapers they most respect and which await them on their desks each day. There's no particular mystery as to why FAIR's conference was such a well attended event. The broadness of the anti-intervention and solidarity movements for Central America has produced an important segment of the educated public, well supplied with its alternative sources of information — including personal experience in the region — and filled with knowledge which runs directly counter to what is seen on mainstream television and read in the major newspapers or magazines. This is a critical opposition that really knows what it is talking about.

Second, the contradictions between the pretensions of the "free press" and the squalid reality have become more vulgarly apparent than ever. As Jeff Cohen, executive director of FAIR, pointed out in his speech, one network NBC is owned by a corporation, General Electric, which is the country's second largest military contractor, second largest vendor of nuclear power, third biggest builder of nuclear weapons systems. With such facts on the table it is impossible to talk about "a free and independent press" without bursting into laughter.

Third, the constant re-definition of permissible political discourse further and further to the right has made an increasingly large number of people acutely aware that about half the political and cultural spectrum is now thus disenfranchised from public debate in the major media.

Hence the growing anger at the undemocratic nature of the major media, sequestered in accelerating oligopoly and making the worst of both worlds: private ownership and state control. The question is: where does a campaign against such a perversion of democracy lead? It begins with agitation and pressure. It continues with political and cultural organising, particularly in the case of publicly-funded radio and TV.

But anyone talking seriously about democracy and mass media is led rapidly towards an overall social vision and the need for a political movement to propel the march towards. I recently read an acute analysis by Robert McChesney, of the School of Communications at Washington, of the lack of debate about the ownership, structure and control of the mass media in American political life. McChesney began by reviewing the battle which began in the mid-20s over which groups would have access to the airwaves, which culminated in a sweeping victory for the networks and the commercial broadcasters. Why, asks McChesney, did the opposing forces fail, even though the final struggle took place in the onset of the depression when disgust with corporate control was profound? He answers that in essence capitalism and the sanctity of private property were off-limits as a topic for public dicussion — as they had been since at least World War One. So the reformers were ill-equipped to answer the commercial broadcasters, who invoked that hallowed social arbiter, the marketplace. Similarly, the reformers could not evoke, let alone confront the class nature of capitalist society, thus — as today — they were unable to refute the liberal/libertarian vision of free and equal individuals buying and selling voluntarily in the market place, in a state of equality.

Status quo

The upshot of these failures is, as McChesney writes, that "the corporate media have actively cultivated an ideology that the status quo is the *only* rational media structure available to a democratic and freedom-loving society. The corporate media have ardently encouraged the belief that even the consideration of alternatives was tantamount to a call for totalitarianism."

So it's clear that criticism of the corporate media ends up with a basic political programme, resting on the proposition that there is a fundamental contradiction between a corporately-owned press and a press fulfilling its duties as a critical social institution. It is not as though such questions have not been raised in the past. In the mid-1930s the philosopher John Dewey was arguing in his essay, *Our Un-Free Press*, that though minor reform of press performance was not to be discouraged, "the only really fundamental approach is to enquire concerning the necessary effect of the present economic system upon the whole system of publicity . . . The question, under this mode of approach, is not how many specific abuses there are and how they may be remedied, but how far genuine intellectual freedom and social responsibility are possible on any large scale under the existing economic regime." □

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Books

Andy Warhol's "Marilyn Monroe" 1964

The necrophilia goes on

What did Marilyn Monroe do *that novelists, theorists, gossip writers and pop lyricists should feel so free to scribble whatever they're thinking all over her body? The latest study, by Graham McCann, sets out to treat the star differently — but, as* **MANDY MERCK** *demonstrates, gets sucked into the same old trap*

AFTER MORE than 40 attempts, I think we can conclude that Marilyn Monroe has not been fortunate in her biographers. From *Hollywood Babylon* to feminist hagiography, hers has been an exemplary life, variously demonstrating the fragility of flesh, the loneliness of fame, the vulnerability of innocence, the cruelty of men.

As each generation discovers its favourite transgression, Monroe has been suitably rewritten, from the presiding deity of sex in the 1950s to its sacrificial victim in the '80s. Most recently, when public attention turned to incest, she became the quintessentially abused child of Gloria Steinem's *Marilyn* — and the namesake of a London psychotherapy clinic for disturbed children endowed by that publication.

Graham McCann comes to this literature with a resolve to do better by not doing it at all. His **Marilyn Monroe** (Polity, £7.95) is an anti-biography, shunning further investigation of the Monroe mystery — what he terms "the body in the library" — for the corpus on its shelves. In examining several lives of the actress, as well as her films, the publicity material which circulated round them and sundry items of posthumous memorabilia, he sets out to study not the individual but her "star image", a concept pioneered by Richard Dyer's work on film actors (see *Heavenly Bodies*, Macmillan, 1987).

McCann's departure from the traditional showbiz biog has other, less admirable precedents. Some writers do it when short of material or the subject's cooperation (David Thomson's execrable speculations on Warren Beatty being a case in point). Others (also including Thomson) do it to indulge a sort of belletristic *chutzpah*. Mailer did it twice to Monroe — first inflating a 25,000-word preface to a picture book into his 105,000-word *Marilyn* (a "novel ready to play by the rules of biography"), then penning the actress's "imaginary memoirs" in *Of Women and Their Elegance*. As a self-proclaimed feminist, McCann has his differences with Mailer's vaginal characterisation of "the sweet angel of sex", but he salutes his candour in admitting the fictional nature of his endeavours. Citing Virginia Woolf's complaint that no life story can possibly correspond to the multiple selves of its subject, he argues that biography is at best an abridgement, a selective account revealing more about its author than anyone else.

But unlike his patron — Sartre's bored biographer Roquentin in *Nausea*, who gradually loses interest in "the true Marquis de Rollebon" — McCann continually returns to the "true" Marilyn Monroe, if only to seek a warrant for his sentimental pilgrimage. Where Dyer's discourse analysis scrupulously separates Monroe's image from her personal biography, McCann wants it both ways, solemnly warning us on one page of the impossibility of demythologising the star, while casually declaring on another: "Behind the hyperbole and the hypotheses there was an orphan who became the most famous figure in the world."

The ambivalence in this approach — including the author's frequent translation from an analyst of pathos to its most unashamed exponent ("After all the pictures and all the prose, there is silence, there she is and here am I") — owes a lot to the hybrid origins of cultural studies. The German philosopher Walter Benjamin, whose writings on mass culture furnish the greater part of this book's ideas, was an outspoken critic of the loss imposed by photography and sound recording on the "aura" of the painting and the live performance. His writings on cinema seized upon Pirandello's evocation of the film actor, whose work — a mere shadow play performed without an audience — is said to exile him "not only from the stage but also from himself".

This emphasis on the authenticity of art and identity prior to mechanical reproduction contrasts sharply with the second strand of McCann's influences, the structuralist interest in all signifying systems, whether "high" or "low" culture, and its refusal of aesthetic evaluation and the essential self. But if it's difficult to reconcile Walter Benjamin with, say, Julia Kristeva (and god knows cultural studies has *tried*), bringing in a conservative commentator like Saul Bellow really looks like tempting fate. Yet McCann blithely identifies Monroe's epoch with Bellow's "moronic inferno" — a view of mass culture which readers of *Humboldt's Gift* may recall unfolding before Charlie Citrine when he discovers that his Mercedes has been vandalised with a baseball bat.

Fear and loathing for popular culture may not be the best allies in analysing one of its most durable figures, but this book is unabashed. Tr. ,sistor radios "blare", sexist remarks are "vulgar", a cabaret performance is "tasteless". The 1953 launch of *Playboy* at 50 cents a copy is described as "cheap thrills for low budgets". (As Dyer points out, *Playboy* was the first glossy men's magazine, carefully marketed for white-collar

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suburbanites in mainsteam outlets. Nor was 50 cents cheap in 1953. But would it have been more reprehensible at a lower price?)

Understandably fascinated by the extraordinary proliferation of portraits like the Warhol silkscreen (which currently adorns the foyer of a Soho strip club in wallpaper-like abstraction — *thirty* smiling Marilyns in black on silver), McCann argues that the image is "at once so touching and so tacky", and ascribes its ubiquity to modernity's failure to stabilise signification, to hold it to an original, intended meaning. But if semiotics says anything, it is that such slippage always occurs, that Lisa del Giocondo's portrait is as vulnerable to this "degradation" as that of a working-class bottle-blonde 450 years later.

As a unique example of "modernity", McCann's Monroe falls through the trapdoor of the tragic biographies he decries. In particular, her films are sacrificed to a scant 25 pages, plus an extremely OTT reading of *The Misfits* as *memento mori*: "watching her . . . is to touch the curve of helplessness one feels when one watches someone die". Characters are read biographically ("Sugar, like Marilyn . . ."), continuity of role is stressed at the expense of the films' variation and complexity and the "dumb blonde" type is treated only as a signifier of Aryan superiority, childlike innocence and feminine bewilderment. I'd like to read a commentary that took such a difficult and anti-naturalist role as seriously as theatre critics treat the characters in Noh drama or Commedia dell'arte, and I'd love to read one which squared this anti-naturalism with Monroe's devotion to Stanislavsky's Method.

Instead, courtesy of Benjamin and Barthes' well-churned work on the photograph, particularly the portrait of the lost loved one, McCann reads the actress through her stills. More than moving pictures, still photographs allow us to indulge our fetishistic desire to *hold on* to the star, but their poignant combination of presence and absence exacts a melancholy toll. From the black-and-white Bert Stern on the cover (pensive, modestly dressed and doomed) to the text's redundant announcement of its funerary significance, this is Dead Marilyn with a vengeance. Where this vengeance comes from — why it inspires feminists like Steinem to what this study calls unconscious anti-feminism, or "redemptive" critics like McCann to restage Monroe's final passion with the regularity of Lent — remain unanswered questions for the biographies to come. □

Mandy Merck is the editor of Screen, *the journal for the Society of Education in Film and Television.*

FASCISM

Divided we kill

Glyn Ford

The Other Face of Terror
RAY HILL with ANDREW BELL *Grafton* £3.50

BRITAIN'S NEO-NAZI groups are turning towards a continental strategy of "terrorist" violence and destabilisation. That we know this is largely due to Ray Hill, former deputy leader of the British National Party (BNP) whose leaflets were found to litter the terraces the morning after the Heysel stadium disaster.

Hill has also been a member at various times of the British Movement, the League of St George and Column 88, the British paramilitary nazi group that takes its name from the eighth letter of the alphabet (HH: Heil Hitler), as well as having been in close touch with David Irving's Focus Policy Study Group. Internationally he has been in contact with members of the *Faisceaux Nationalistes Européens*, the French Nazi Group, Le Pen's *Front National* and the whole scatter of extreme right-wing groups that attended the annual European nazi rally at Diksmuide in Belgium.

Ray Hill, like Howard W. Cambell Jr in Kurt Vonnegut's *Mother Night*, was an infiltrator of the extreme right. In this he worked closely with the anti-fascist investigative journalists of *Searchlight*. He was first drawn into the murky world of the neo-fascists in the late 1960s when he responded to an advertisement in the *Leicester Mercury* for a group called AIMS (Anti-Immigration Society). This proved to be a conveyor belt that carried him swiftly via the Racial Preservation Society to the "Jewish conspiracy for world domination" and the Leicester leadership of Colin Jordan's British Movement. By 1970 Ray Hill, following the logic of his then beliefs, emigrated with his family to South Africa, leaving behind him a charge of assault and actual bodily harm arising from a scuffle in a café with some Leicester Unversity students.

Hill's pauline conversion came in 1979 when, as he describes in *The Other Face of Terror*, he saw the practical human consequences of the campaign to evict Indians from accommodation in white suburbs under the Group Areas Act. Having watched families thrown onto the streets with nowhere at all to go, he started to supply information on the activities of his colleagues to Jewish organisations in South Africa. Hill returned to England shortly afterwards, just before committal hearings were due against him for a credit card fraud he strongly denied. Back in the UK he cleared up his outstanding assault charge with the assistance of Anthony Reed Herbert, a solicitor and leading member of Leicester's National Front. From then on he was back in the game and on the merry-go-round of the far right's multifarious groups and parties.

It was this period, just as the National Front started to fragment under the twin pressures of a Conservative Party moving sharply to the right and the exposure of its real politics and leaders by the Anti Nazi League, that Hill proved most helpful to *Searchlight* as an *agent provocateur*. He helped to ensure that the various parts did not coalesce and formented schisms within the various factions remaining. He also attempted to identify the links between the various neo-nazi groups and political violence and terrorism.

After the 1979 electoral collapse of the National Front, an enthusiasm for "Strasserism" swept through its depleted ranks. The Strasser brothers represented, during the pre-war Hitler regime, the "socialist" component of national socialism, with an emphasis on the need to build the party around working-class street fighters. There was a coup within the Front at the end of 1983 and the Strasserites took over, under the influence of members of an Italian terrorist cell in exile in

On the beach at Thorpeness

Michael Hofmann

I looked idly right for corpses in the underbrush,
then left, to check that Sizewell was still there.
The wind was from that quarter, northeasterly, a seawind,
B-wind, from that triune reliable fissile block.

— It blackened the drainage ditches
on the low coastal plain, blew up a dry tushing rustle
from the liberal-democratic Aesopian bullrushes,
and an ill-tempered creaking from Christian oaks . . .

A set of three-point lion prints padded up the beach.
The tideline was a ravel of seaweed and detritus,
a red ragged square of John Bull plastic,
a gull's feather lying down by a fishspine.

The North Sea was a yeasty, sudsy brown slop.
My feet jingled on the sloping gravel,
a crisp musical shingle. My tracks were oval holes
like whole notes or snowshoes or Dover soles.

Roaring waves of fighters headed back to Bentwaters.
The tide advanced in blunt codshead curves,
ebbed through the chattering teeth of the pebbles.
Jaw jaw. War war.

Michael Hofmann's most recent collection, Acrimony, *is published by Faber.*

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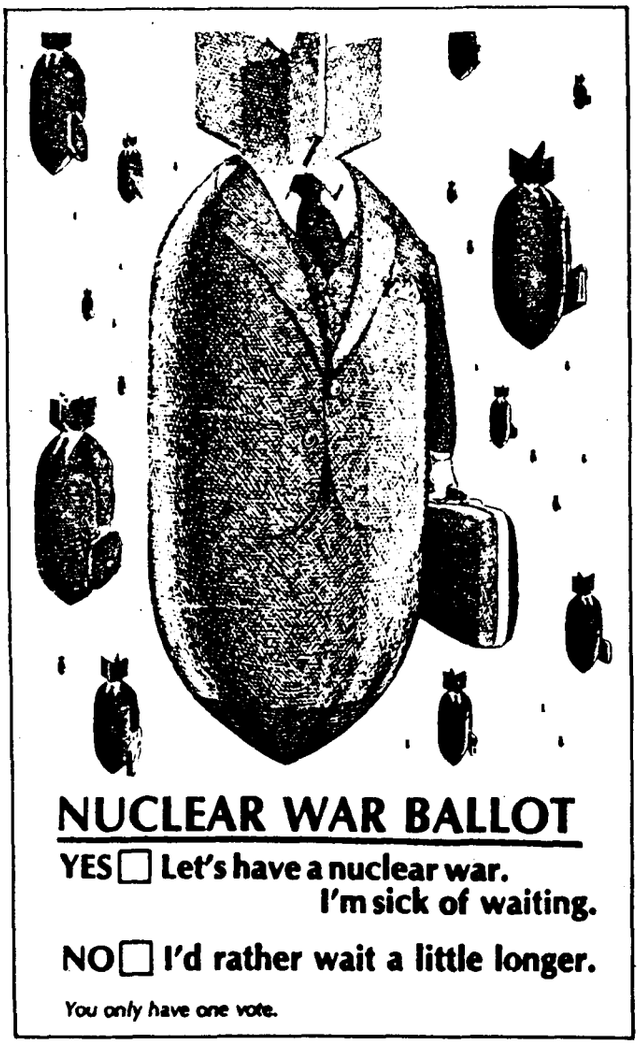

A long time ago there appeared in New York a smart anarcho-academic journal called *Semiotext(e)*, which devoted issues to "Nietzsche's Return" and *Anti-Oedipus* while similar mags were still drearily scratching around at the tail-end of structuralism. It grew bigger and brighter, with Italian and German issues, intelligently showcasing the livelier bits of Europe's new social movements. And it spawned tiny black books called "Foreign Agents" full of French stuff, mostly by Deleuze and Guattari, Baudrillard and Virilio and who cared that the translations were a bit iffy. Then came a soporific issue titled "Oasis", and a long silence. Had they disbanded (like everything else)? No, because now "the journal denounced in the US Senate for its advocacy of 'animal sex' " presents SEMIOTEXT(E) USA (£9.45 inc. p&p from Central Books, 14 The Leathermarket, London SE1), nothing more or less than "the dadblamed Sears 'n' Roebuck catalog of th'American Underground". It seems the NY coterie has finally returned from its Grand Tourof foreign margins to catch up on all the exciting things happening just down the block. Back to their rhizomes. Old French friends are still there, but in 350 rough and ready pages they're swamped by homegrown cultists, ranters, poets and pranksters. A whole nation of troublemakers – "and from that nation we shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government that offs the people, buys the people, forks the people, shall soon perish." Progressive? (the return of *politics*). Regressive? (the return of '60s bravado and *National Lampoon* sexuality, including the cock-shots stuck in the back that the printers wouldn't print). Aggressive and egressive, certainly, which makes a pleasant change. (Malcolm Imrie)

England. Members of *Nucleii Armati Rivoluzionari* are committed to a "strategy of tension" where the liberal state is brought to collapse through terrorist violence, making a right-wing takeover acceptable.

It is this new ideology that threatens to transform Britain's neo-nazi groups into the terrorist cells found elsewhere on the continent. Hill was involved in supplying the Special Branch with information on a plot to bomb the Notting Hill Carnival in 1981 that involved detonators being brought in from Paris. Tony Malski, whose job it was to bring in the detonators, was warned by Special Branch on his way to Paris that they had been tipped off as to what he was planning to bring back.

The threat has not disappeared, however, and after the French Presidential Elections is likely to revive again in France, as the parliamentary road to power is seen to close for the foreseeable future for Jean-Marie Le Pen and his *Front National*.

Howard W. Campbell Jr in *Mother Night* is torn after the war as to whether his activities did more to aid than harm the Nazi party. This is not a dilemma that faces the author of *The Other Face of Terror*. In the light of the political practices of some of his erstwhile colleagues, it is hardly surprising that Ray Hill is currently in hiding. ☐

Glyn Ford is chair of the European Parliament's Committe of Inquiry into the Growth of Racism and Fascism in Europe.

SOCIALIST SCIENCE

Little and large

Felix Pirani

Molecules and Minds
STEVEN ROSE *Open University* £25 & £8.95

MUCH OF MODERN SCIENCE is rooted in the method of reduction, which entails, in the first place, studying the parts to understand the whole. For societies, you study individuals; for individuals, their organs; for organs, their cells; for cells, their molecules; for molecules, their atoms; for atoms, their protons and electrons . . .

Nobody would deny that this is one successful way of working, but many scientists insist that the parts are in some way *more fundamental* than the whole and that, if you could describe them completely, you could predict everything about the behaviour of the whole. In the end, for example, a complete knowledge of atomic structure would explain completely the behaviour of the DNA in genetic material, a complete knowledge of DNA would explain completely the behaviour of each individual and this, in turn, would completely explain society.

The danger inherent in such arguments is apparent. For example, if the behaviour of the individual is determined by his or her DNA, then misbehaviour can be dealt with by interfering with the DNA (or some larger structure "determined" by it). For thorough-going reductionists, things have to be the way they are: racial, sexual and class oppression are all determined, in the last analysis, by the properties of atoms, and so nothing can be done about them.

Even in physics and astronomy, where it has been most successful, reductionism often supplies only part of the explanation, sometimes none of it. Why it is dark at night, or why the future can be distinguished from the past, are questions beyond the reductionists's reach. Complete explanations require a bit of holism — explaining from the top down instead of from the bottom up — but also, as Steven Rose says in this excellent book, "what is ultimately needed is to transcend both, by a mode of description which may perhaps best be described as dialectical, or, if this word is considered to carry too much historical baggage, then perhaps 'integrationist'."

Is it possible to exploit reductionist methods without embracing the ideological trappings which generally accompany them? This is the central theme of *Molecules and Minds* and an important one for scientists on the left. The answer is Yes, but you'll have to be careful, and each of the book's ten chapters (nine of which have been published before in more-or-less similar form) contributes to the debate. The one completely new chapter deals with the emotive question of animal "rights"; a chapter on sociobiology and right-wing politics was written jointly with Hilary Rose; genetic manipulation and chemical and biological warfare — familiar Rosean (Roseate?) themes — also find their place.

The most exciting part of the book is the last quarter, on the mind and the brain, learning and

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memory and the possibility of a dialectical phychobiology. It makes a start at bringing up to date Rose's wonderful earlier book, *The Conscious Brain*, now 15 years old. This part begins with an analysis of the relationships between behaviour and biochemistry: there are some parallels, but not all biochemical events translate into behavioural ones and not all behaviours translate usefully into biochemistry.

A key idea is that descriptions of "the same" event on different levels — physical, chemical, biochemical, physiological, psychological or social — should be thought of as related not causally, but by translation, in rather the same way as versions of "the same" statement, made in different languages, are related. Difficulties encountered in describing "the same" event on different levels are comparable to difficulties in translating poetry from one language to another. From this analysis of levels, Rose goes on to construct what could be called dialectically materialist criteria for biological and biochemical concomitants of memory events in the brain. He ends the book with a description of his own experiments, devised to satisfy these criteria, on very young chicks.

Like the biological systems it concerns, *Molecules and Minds* is more than the sum of its parts. It points the way to a programme of *rehabilitation* of science, of purging the "contempt which most Western Marxism today shows towards the natural sciences as a whole". And throughout the book, together with the notes of caution, run strands of optimism, indications of what a socialist science could be like, and of what socialist scientists can do to bring it closer. □

FICTION

Is everybody happy?

Michèle Roberts

The Love of Good Women
ISABEL MILLER *Black Swan* £3.95

ISABEL MILLER'S FIRST novel, *Patience and Sarah*, told the charming story of the loving friendship, ripening into eroticism and lifelong mutual commitment, between two women fleeing the narrowness and bigotry of their small home community for a freer and more independent life of their own choosing. Set in early 19th-century New England, the novel quickly became a bestseller and has remained a landmark in the literature — partly, perhaps, because it allowed its heroines a realistically happy ending (we all know lesbians are supposed to die horribly lonely deaths, preferably after drug overdoses/sexual rejection/religious crises/botched sex-changes/too much booze).

Its success might also perhaps have been due to its protagonists never having heard of the third sex. They were not monocled or upper-crusty or in love with their dogs, but were, in fact, rather womanly women, deeply in love with each other. Harnessing lesbianism to the genres of romance and hardy-pioneer fiction proved a winner. It's sad that Isabel Miller's second novel, though performing a similar cross-fertilisation, succeeds less well.

Set in the south during the later years of World War Two, the novel charts the growth towards economic and sexual independence of two sisters-in-law, Gertrude and Milly. Gertrude is straight as they come: deeply wedded not just to her appalling husband Earl but also to supposedly prevailing notions of femininity: masochistic submission, inability to get angry or admit discontent, slavish devotion to ironing-board and dirty socks. The romance we're dealing with here is *Cinderella*: Gertrude rises from the dust and ashes of domesticity when Earl, a transvestite Good Fairy, insists she get a job at the local munitions fatory and unwittingly releases his wife to the dangerous pleasures of earning a living, making friends with the wonderful sassy women on the production line (including quite a few lesbians, who turn out to be just as salt of the earth as their het sisters) and, eventually, not only finding herself a better man but also a full-time post running a hamburger restaurant.

A switch of narrative enables Miller to avoid demonstrating Gertrude's transformation from goose to swan at any convincing length: Milly now takes over with *her* side of the story. Married to Earl's successful, handsome, older brother Barney, she has struggled against her lesbianism for years — but, in the process, has made a true friend of her husband, who comes to sympathise with her needs for female affection and lust that he can't fulfil. So, when Barney goes off to war, Milly can take a woman lover, Phil, secure in the knowledge that Barney, on his return, won't turn violent or voyeuristic.

Nor does he: an ardent lover of women and sex, he simply accepts his banishment from Milly's bed with good grace and tumbles into Gertrude's instead. He's the man she's always wanted and *her* husband, Earl, accepts his demotion with admirable equanimity. One love-nest for both couples; Barney releases his children to Milly and Phil without a murmur and starts a new life with Gertrude, whose friend Ada from the factory comes along too.

This magical ease whereby all works out for the best romanticises the powerful and passionate love between Milly and Phil and also obscures its likely consequences in the God-fearing suburbs of the 1950s. True, other lesbian couples are discovered to exist in the neighbourhood (there's a lovely scene when a happy Milly attends her first lesbian dinner party) but their pain at social ostracism and isolation has to be downplayed in the interests of securing a happy ending. Milly, bighearted, unconventional and messy, is an engaging and sympathetic character, and her struggles for love and freedom are movingly described, but Isabel Miller's simplistic use of fairytale situations (two brothers loving two sisters) and fairytale solutions (wave your wand and swap the baddies for goodies) damages her commitedly serious account of the impact of war on women's notions of love, money and domesticity. □

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PAPERBACKS

Better translate than never

Alan Brien

BENITO PEREZ GALDOS is a name that's been recently tripping off critical lips, often landing in a sentence containing Dickens, Balzac and Flaubert and usually gift-wrapped with some such acolade as "Spain's most important novelist after Cervantes".

Well, to those who find Galdos' **Torquemada** (Deutsch, £8.95, £15.95 hardback) as compulsively readable as Cervantes' *Don Quixote* — the best of luck! For me, his fictional life-story of a crafty usurer in late 19th-century Madrid, flopping desperately from pike in a tiny, muddy backwater to shark in a grand, ornamental lake, never touches any of the great European novels it is supposed to rival.

Admittedly, the *mot juste* is not so easy to pick when you are embarked on a *comedie humaine* of some 80 volumes, but need the style be at once so stilted and so idiosyncratic, like a translation of a translation? Where are the intricate, clockmaker's plots of Dickens, metaphor within metaphor? What has happened to the whip-cracking, coach-rocking narrative drive of Balzac? Even Galdos' greatest admirers do not claim he was ever much admitted to the interior lives of his characters, and readers accustomed to the subtleties of a James or a Conrad will find his nudges and underlinings often painfully brusing. If there is an obvious Anglo equivalent, I fancy it may be Somerset Maugham — not the worst writer by any means, an eagle-eyed observer and a button-holing entertainer who never claimed to be the author of masterpieces.

I have never quite understood how reviewers judge translations unless they know the original language sufficiently well to read, with ease, the same book *not* in translation. Otherwise, all they are telling us is that the work comes across as if well written in English, which may not be what the Finnish or Arabic author, say, or their translators intended. For instance, there is no dispute over whether Boris Pasternak's **Dr Zhivago** (Collins Harvill, £5.95) is a masterpiece or not, yet I remember encountering it 30 years ago and registering that the translators (Max Hayward and Manya Harari) in the first edition had confessed, with unusual modesty, that Pasternak's poetic genius faced them with difficulties "that are almost insurmountable and we have no illusions that we have done justice, *even remotely*, to the original".

The italics are mine. But the phrase remains unchanged in 1988, 18 editions later, and their Translators' Note still ends. "We trust that one day *Doctor Zhivago* will fall into the hands of a translator whose talent is equal to that of its author." Doesn't it seem just a trifle insulting to a new generation of book buyers, more than a quarter of a century later, to repeat this apology despite their version having been such a long-time bestseller and presumably by now having made a more than tidy profit for all concerned? At this rate, most of us investors in the first edition will be

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dead before this messianic talent is made incarnate.

Dr Zhivago reads as freshly as ever, with all those oddities of observation and construction we have learned to characterise as Russian. Attention to sudden, strange alternations of temperature, pressure, light, for example, that seem to echo inner meteorology. Enormous coincidences where people still bump into each other even when scattered across the largest country in the world. It was only this second time that I noted the defiant improbability of Yury and Lara, the predestined star-crossed lovers, both having their families ruined by the same hiss-worthy villain out of Victorian melodrama.

It also comes as a surprise to realise how modestly reticent about sex this 1960s key-work is. We learn no details about Lara's seduction as a girl by her mother's protector that would not be proper in Meredith or Thackeray, though intimate sensual detail is not shirked elsewhere.

On the other hand, **The Leopard** (Collins Harvill, £4.95) has developed a chill at its centre, like an elaborate ice-pudding palace, already a classic before its time, yesterday's masterpiece. I found this second reading of it hard to finish. The gap between the Prince of Lampedusa and the modern reader is perhaps better demonstrated by the characteristic story, also printed in this volume, "The Professor and the Siren". It is difficult to imagine any living writer spreading over 26 pages a *fin de siècle* fantasy about a scholar whose perfection of ancient Greek stemmed from making love to a mermaid.

I took **The Stories of Heinrich Boll** (Abacus, £5.99) into hospital with me, my first stay and my first operation. It says much for the collection that I came out eager for his novels though so many of these 60-odd tales, often brilliantly inventive reworkings of the same pattern of incidents, concern wounded and mutilated men, transferred back unrecognised, to unrecognisable scenes of their youth. Such is the strength of life with which he imbues the pages, the determination to survive the worst that total war and aftermath can do to the human spirit, that the reader emeges reinvigorated and optimistic, despite the occasional limp, or even missing limb. It sounds impossible and so it should be but it isn't.

Boll was just a name to me. D. R. Popescu was not even that. Yet he is a Romanian practitioner of a variety of that magic realism I had thought only domesticated in South America, though perhaps the resemblance to Marquez and Co. is only superficial. Certainly, in **The Royal Hunt** (Quartet, £4.95), Popescu has none of their tropical excitment, some times mounting to enjoyment, over scenes of slaughter, torture, defeat and destruction. This is a fable, on many levels, for an older, colder clime, as near Homer as Aesop, yet recognisably part of an Eastern European today. Through the eyes of an adolescent village boy, who walks everywhere on stilts, we gradually uncover the history of an attack of panic, and epidemic of terror, that is political and personal, animal and intellectual. Popescu may be nearer to Swift, particularly in the way he forces us to make our own connections and therefore our own judgments. He is also a member of the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party, and the National Assembly. Who can resist that? No one who reads the first ten pages.

Chris Mullin MP is not quite at that height in the Labour Party but his political thriller **The Last Man out of Saigon** (Corgi, £2.50) has the rare advantage, for *NS* readers, of being solidly on the left side, even though his hero is a CIA man. A thoroughly enjoyable, professional piece of work, entirely convincing and all too plausible, if still slightly over-written and given to telling us what we ought to be able to work out for ourselves: i.e. a villanous, Germanic operative with "*cruel* blue eyes".

James Murray's **The Pale Sergeant** (Flamingo, £3.50) is an Australian appointment in Samara where the usual mixed group end up in a deathly head-on collision in the outback. I found it totally unlikely, rather silly and faintly sickening, and set down in a style which deserves better materials.

FIFTIES

More in anger

Geoff Dyer

Success Stories
HARRY RITCHIE *Faber* £12.50

FROM KENNETH ALLSOP's *The Angry Decade* to Robert Hewison's more recent survey *In Anger*, the cultural life of the 1950s has been dominated by one word. Informative but dull, *Success Stories* focuses on the period 1956-58 to discover how it was that "Anger" and the Angry Young Men came to colour the whole decade in their image.

Though his subtitle is "Literature and the Media in England 1950-1959" Harry Ritchie (and what an angry-young-name that is) deals fairly quickly with the early years, when journals and men of letters spent much of their time waiting for the first signs of an emergent movement that would offer the decade a distinctive sense of itself. Gradually the anti-metropolitan, anti-modernist impulses of the Movement poets made themselves tentatively felt. One of these poets, John Wain, arranged for his friend Kingsley Amis to give a radio reading from a novel that he was writing. The novel, *Lucky Jim*, was eventually published in 1954 but it was not until May 1956, with the appearance of Colin Wilson's *The Outsider* and the opening of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, that sparks started to fly. Wilson was instantly lauded as a genius; *Look Back in Anger*, after an initially hostile reception, gradually achieved notoriety. After a chance remark by a Press Officer at the Royal Court the phrase "Angry Young Man" was readily taken up by the media and Amis, Osborne, Wilson and others found themselves reluctantly sharing the same umbrella in a deluge of press attention.

In 1957 Tom Maschler edited *Declaration*, a collection of essays by Wilson, Osborne and another half dozen or so young writers and the term's catchment area grew still further. *Declaration* clarified nothing but, in its diversity and confusion, it served as something of a manifesto for the intemperate and contradictory impulses of the AYM.

Ritchie doggedly chronicles and documents the development of the fortunes of the principal protagonists over the next couple of years. The debate as to what exactly these representative men were representative *of* was marked on all sides by an intellectual poverty rarely seen outside The House of Lords. "Is he the tough intellectual or the intellectual tough?" wondered Walter Allen about Jim Dixon in these very pages. Even A.J.P. Taylor was moved to comment that "it was Lucky Jim who marched to Aldermaston, some thousands of him".

If the debate they generated was less than impressive so, in retrospect, are the works themselves. Ritchie rightfully pans Colin Wilson as the author of ostentatious rubbish (the only interesting thing about *The Outsider* now is how people were taken in by its spurious display of learning) and pitches into *Look Back in Anger* as hackneyed melodrama by a writer with a gift for vituperative indignation. By the end of the decade most of the other writers associated with the AYM had been forgotten: no big loss since, as Ritchie notes, most of them were pretty crumby anyway. This leaves us with Kingsley Amis who fares rather better in Ritchie's estimation — though his appraisal of *Lucky Jim* is probably the weariest piece of writing in the whole book. My own feeling is that apart from the fact that he's sometimes pretty funny — big deal — Amis, along with John Wain (staggeringly uninteresting), is a writer whom anyone seriously concerned with literature can take pride in not having read. With hindsight, as has been remarked several times before, the best books of the period were those which attracted rather less attention (curiously, as Ritchie points out, Alan Sillitoe, who actually came closer to the ideal of the AYM than any of the others, was virtually ignored until the 1960s).

In the last chapter (readers impatient with the thoroughness of Ritchie's navigation would do well to turn straight there) Ritchie is adamant not only that the AYM phenomena was an invention of the media, but that "another literary myth of the fifties could well have been manufactured in the same way as Anger". That the advent of the AYM was a *literary* event — one characterised by a blokeish rejection of the Bloomsbury sense of the exquisite — can't be doubted, but it was a literary event that occurred at a particular moment of socio-historical conjuncture. There are no accidents in history and in the late 1950s a number of possibilities and forces set in motion by the post-war settlement converged in such a way as to make it *extremely likely* that something resembling the phenomenon of the AYM would become a principal site of the decade's identity. The disillusionment that succeeded the ebullient promise of 1945 bred a jaded and impatient militancy but, since this militancy was rooted in a loss of faith in politics in general, it could be expressed only as personal disgruntlement. Vitally, as Trevor Blackwell and Jeremy Seabrook have pointed out, there took place in the 1950s "an individualising of socially produced phenomena" in which the individual was burdened with a weight of "social and economic contradictions which [were] no longer articulated in public discourse". It was in the nature of the general phenomenon that it should be variously rather than consistently manifested in the work of the writers who articulated it. □

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ARTS

Have their carcases

Everyone's singing the praises of Lucian Freud — but, asks **JOHN SPURLING**, *is he anything more than an obsessive and highly conventional painter of still lifes?*

THERE'S LITTLE POINT in criticising an artist as long established and consistent as **Lucian Freud**. He's been exhibiting for some 46 years, the substance of his work has hardly altered (though there have been occasional shifts of style), he does what he does and he is what he is. On the other hand, it's irritating to be told by Robert Hughes, in the introduction to the catalogue for Freud's current retrospective (at the Hayward until 17 April, then on to Berlin), that he "has become the greatest living realist painter".

David Hockney remarks, in the catalogue to *his* current retrospective in Los Angeles, that if "Boy Leading a Horse" from Picasso's Rose Period is still considered a more realistic painting than his proto-Cubist "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon", that is because the perceptual revolution inaugurated by "Les Demoiselles" "has still not truly arrived". Lucian Freud may or may not be the greatest living painter working in an illusionistic convention based on one-point perspective and the skilful imitation of surface materials: flesh, leaves, hair, cloth, etc. The interesting question at this late date is why, being neither an academician nor a populist, he has stuck to that convention.

Part of the answer lies in his subject-matter: mostly women, a few men, with the odd plant and urban landscape. The human subjects are all in a sense portraits. Some, such as those of his mother, his friend Frank Auerbach or his patron Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza, are overtly so; the rest, even if unknown and unnamed, are people who are part of his life rather than professional models.

Yet they are portraits of a peculiar kind. The traditional relationship of portrait painter to sitter includes an element of deference on the painter's part, if not to the sitter's superior social or financial status at least to his or her independence or individuality. "This person," such a portraitist suggests, "is more than just the envelope I see, there are private places of mental and emotional activity, of personal experience and genetic tendency which I may guess and hint at but cannot fully express because another person is finally a mystery." Lucian Freud does not so much refresh the parts that other portrait painters cannot reach as completely exclude them, excise them, declare them invalid. His sitters, whose genitals and other physical privacies are so often fully present in the paintings, are mentally, emotionally and personally castrated. Everything that makes them particular, except their physique, is absent. Not for nothing do they look like victims of the Thought Police, poleaxed and emptied by hours and days of interrogation. The notorious slowness of Freud's working method — I think I heard Baron Thyssen say, on a radio programme, that the sittings for his portrait had lasted 180 hours — naturally brings about what he is after anyway: the complete subjection of the other person.

Whistler's mother didn't know anything; *Freud*'s mother (seen above with female carcase in the background) has been subjected to 1,000 of her son's sittings

In other words, Freud is not really a portrait painter at all, but a still-life painter. His humans are carcases — no different in what he wants of them than the rubbish-strewn backyard viewed from his window or the browning pot-plant in one corner of his room. In so far as they express the boredom and exhaustion of their part in the operation they are more sentient than the plants or occasionally dogs that pass the hours away beside them, but essentially the only element is the painter's eye and hand. If there were some trace of humour or irony in his solipsism — as, for instance, in Beckett's — one might imagine that his deeper purpose was to subvert and turn against themselves both his own desire for total control over his subjects and the illusionistic convention he is using to obtain it. As it is, one must conclude that Freud is being perfectly straight; he just wants life, the world, time to stop still while he practises his obsessively reproductive art.

Meanwhile, the National Gallery and Tate are both paying tribute to outstanding collectors — the former until 3 May, the latter until 4 April. **Sir George Beaumont**'s gift of 16 paintings to the nation in 1823 led directly to the creation of the National Gallery and several of the works he gave — Canaletto's "Stonemason's Yard", Rubens' great "Autumn Landscape" and three Claudes — are still among its best treasures. Alas, over-influenced by his friend Reynolds, he didn't think his late Gainsborough worthy of inclusion (it's now in Los Angeles), nor, though he encouraged and partly admired Constable, does he seem even to have owned any significant painting by him. He died in 1827, 11 years before the opening of the present building in Trafalgar Square. If his ghost still walks, tormented by the later inclusion of his especial *bête noire*, Turner, it may perhaps be assuaged by this impressive re-assembly of his old familiars from Coleorton Hall, all of which — with the glaring exception of Benjamin West's fustian history-piece, "Pylades and Orestes" — still look very good indeed.

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The irascible **Douglas Cooper**, who died in 1984, was almost as important to Cubism, through his promotion and collection of it, as its creators. The Tate's exhibition of works on paper which once hung in Cooper's French chateau was assembled and first shown in Basel. Eighty-one drawings, gouaches, watercolours and prints mainly by Picasso, Braque, Leger and Gris bear eloquent witness to the vitality, variety and wit of that 75-year-old revolution which "has still not truly arrived". □

DANCE

Masses of movement

Stephanie Jordan

THERE HAVE BEEN encouraging signs recently that the non-establishment, experimental wing of dance in this country is ready to hold its own in large venues and generate large audiences. Soon after a highly successful Dance Umbrella gala at Sadler's Wells, the Rosemary Butcher Dance Company appeared in concert with Michael Nyman at the Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Place Theatre's Spring Loaded Festival took over the Hackney Empire for five nights. This breakthrough is thanks to a handful of imaginative people who believe in the quality of today's New Dance.

It is the conviction of John Ashford, director of the 250-seat Place Theatre, that experimental groups, nearly all of which are, in Arts Council parlance, "small scale", should no longer be automatically condemned to the equivalent in venues and audiences. Such imposed conditions, he argues, keep a company low-profile and thinking small, whereas the new brand of theatrical work which embraces popular culture as serious material might well have a broad public appeal. It is surely worth finding out.

The Place/Hackney and QEH dance projects are very different but their directors are collaborating in their endeavours and share their main aim of building a new audience for dance. Vanessa Lindsay, who organises the New Dance activities at the QEH, insists that she is not poaching the regular dance audiences from across the river; it wasn't the Sadler's Wells brigade who attended the London Contemporary in 1987. She told me that the first part of her task is to get the South Bank concert and theatre audiences (and foyer crowd) to come to dance — hence her policy to cross dance with other arts as much as possible. The next stage is to attract people from further beyond. By 1991, Lindsay plans to have at least two mini-seasons of dance at the QEH as well as single performances throughout the year.

The spin-offs from the dynamic marketing that Lindsay and Ashford propose could be considerable: not only cross-overs between the respective arts clientèles of a venue but a new mobility between venues, small to large and vice-versa, and a much greater number of people engaged in the Great Crawl between dance venues.

Billed as "New Dance Greatest Hits" the Hackney programme aimed not only at bringing in a variety of groups — the growing black artistic community in Hackney (with New York's Urban Bush Women), denizens of Clubland (Matthew Hawkins' Imminent Dancers' Group) and teenage popsters (La Bouche) — but also at overlapping these audiences with a season-ticket scheme. For these groups, audiences were enthusiastic if sometimes modest (the season received no press previews) but for DV8 Physical Theatre the whole of London seemed to be queueing at the door; 80 per cent capacity, a strong start to the season.

The atmosphere at the 1000-seat Empire is, to say the least, unusual. Amid the splendid Imperial red and gilt, people buy drinks from a bar in the auditorium and take them to their seats. The odd person might roam around during the show. The curtain may rise before a partially ambulatory audience, the houselights up. If you can accept all this, you can enjoy a friendly night out. In the music hall tradition of the Empire — now there is New Variety with Frankie Vaughan and Lennie Henry — dancers who play here cannot afford to be introvert but must say what they have to loud and clear.

Some did better than others, DV8 best of all, with a familiar programme reworked and improved. Newson and group have a special gift for theatrical timing, using confrontational repetition for humour, continuing this into discomfort, knowing precisely when and how, in order to keep the work lively, they must shift to something new. Disappointingly, the otherwise canny female quartet The Cholmondeleys were sometimes lost on the Empire stage. Through bad lighting design, crucial facial expressions and small gestures were adumbrated, bodies in half-dark. It is a fault easily remedied but one that diminished the dance in these enlarged circumstances.

At the QEH, Butcher and Nyman easily filled the house (200 turned away). Butcher's work is precisely placed in that space, being spare and contemplative and therefore quite wrong for the Empire. The stage curtaining had been removed to make a vast open space of some 60-feet depth, pristine and glowing under Dave Richardson's skilful lighting.

Flying Lines has never looked better, with its finest group of performers yet, thrilling to their generous territory and finding the full potential for tension and exuberance in their near-misses and celebratory circlings. *Touch the Earth* fared less well. At the Whitechapel Gallery, it had been magical but here, the sound, overamplified and strained, created problems for the choreography, undermining its serenity.

Nevertheless, after twelve years of quiet, innovative work, the evening was a notable success for Butcher. In proving capable of attracting a large audience, she has justified the strategy of enlightened individuals like Ashford and Lindsay. □

Perfectly placed in space: the Rosemary Butcher Dance Company

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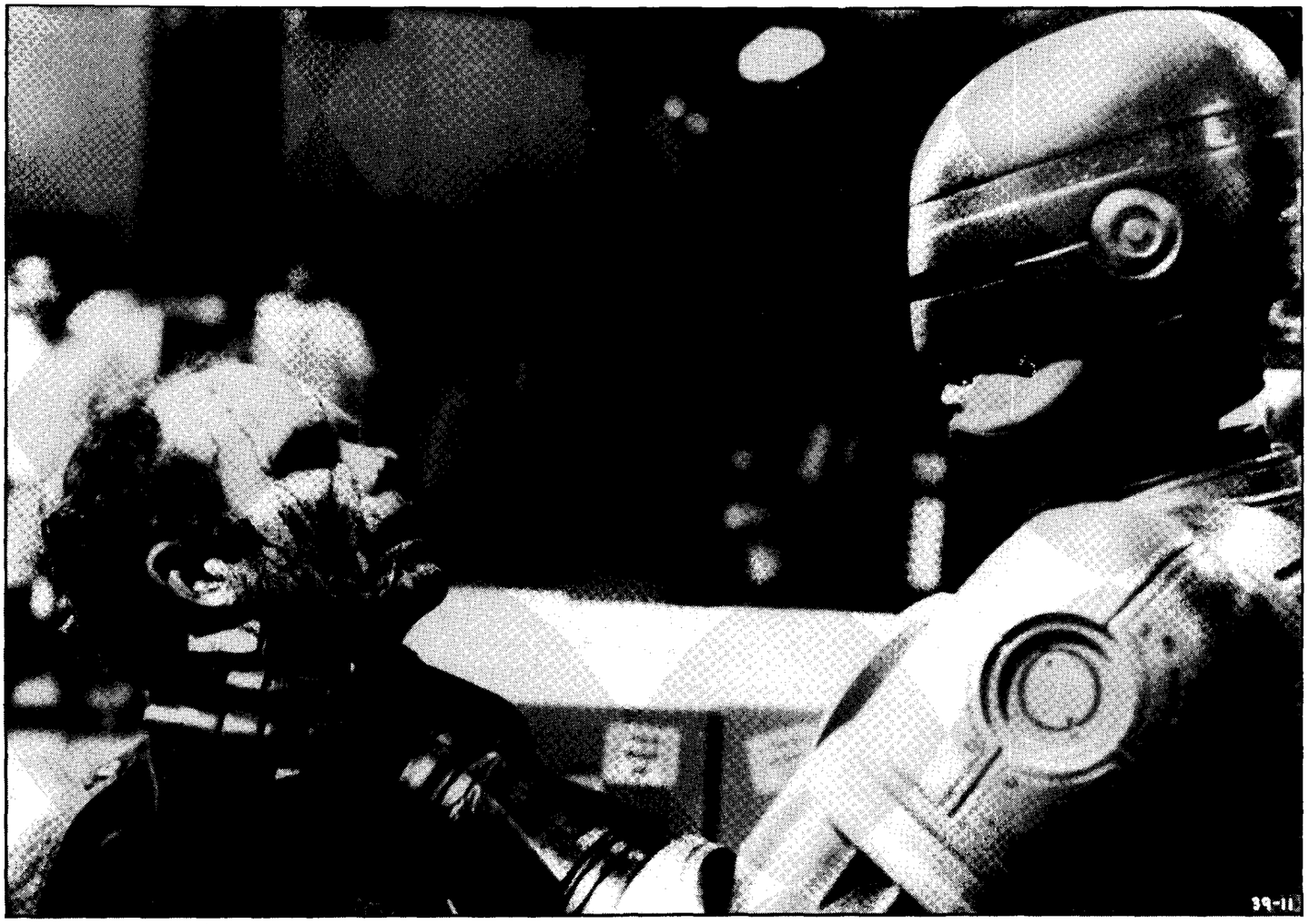

Baby-lips RoboCop (Peter Weller) gets a little bit cross with gang leader Clarence (Kurtwood Smith)

CINEMA

Cutest little baby face

Judith Williamson

RoboCop (18)
General Release

SET IN A DYSTOPIAN "near future" of high tech and dereliction, *RoboCop* looks set to follow *Bladerunner* in its blend of glamour, violence and social commentary as the thinking person's version of a popular movie genre. Any vision of the future speaks, of course, about the present: and these films are seen by many as products of "postmodernity", with their replicants and simulacra, global power systems and sealed image circuitry in which the world is as real as the latest broadcast.

Yet in their supposedly affect-less universes these films pursue almost blindingly romantic aims: blinding because their simplicity and sentimentality are rendered invisible by the clever conceptual backdrops which explain their cult status (functioning alongside their appeal to a wider audience, discussed elsewhere in this magazine last week).

I have to say that I found *RoboCop* a very enjoyable film. Its pace is zappy, its script is witty and the political satire is acute: we are whisked through a wryly topical future in which the Detroit Police Dept has been privatised and is run by a business conglomerate, OmniConsumer Products (OCP). One current conception of futureness seems to be embodied in the very construction of these words, OmniConsumer and RoboCop: a construction identical to that signal of newness found in the title of the new *TheGuardian* (or, come to that, the newest of soap operas, *EastEnders*). What does this obsessive semantic suture mean? What do *RoboCop* and *ReviewGuardian* have in common? The craze for welding adjectives and prepositions onto the nouns they qualify seems to me interesting in itself, but with *RoboCop* it assumes a literal form: the cybernetic amalgam of robot and cop which constitutes the key "character" and, in a looser sense, the generic compound which explains the film's success — postmodern ideas and *Terminator*-esque fantasies.

The film starts with a hilarious news broadcast in which inanely smiling announcers reveal that South Africa has the bomb but that crime is the most serious threat to US society, before ads offer up privatised medicine at the Family Heart Centre ("You pick the heart — we do the rest") and NUK'EM ("Another quality home game from Buffalo"). This kind of snappy critique of contemporary politics and media makes the film instantly appealing to people like myself and no doubt many *New Statesman* (not yet *NewStatesman*, thank God) readers; and is wound into the plot so that it is little surprise that the chief Baddy in OCP turns out to be the paymaster of the chief Baddy in the drugs-crime-ring — the cold-blooded, bespectacled villain who kills the cute, blond policeman Murphy in a scene of extraordinary sadism which provides, simultaneously, the organic fodder for the RoboCop creation, and the narrative rationale for RoboCop/Murphy's surfacing emotion of revenge.

The linking of business powers with organised crime is hardly a new theme — it provides the backdrop to, for example, *The Big Heat* — and it is convenient to know that the real nasties are all, ultimately, in the pay of the capitalist pigs (abandoning any politicised notion of criminality). *RoboCop* is a brilliant thriller within this format, but what is really specific to its appeal is the grafting of certain infantile body-fantasies onto a satisfyingly political framework.

For within the social realm *RoboCop* is the

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ultimate right-on hero, saving a little old couple from being robbed in their sweetshop, protecting a woman who is about to be raped (even phoning a rape crisis centre) and generally doing good and useful deeds in accordance with his directives, which are to serve the public trust, uphold the law, and protect the innocent. The fourth (classified) directive prevents him from attacking any employee of OCP.

This is because an earlier model, the purely robotic "enforcement droid" ED 209, has gone beserk in an exhilarating scene near the start of the film which leaves an OCP employee splatted all over the table at a board meeting. The comic-strip nature of this violence (straight from the Judge Dredd school) is characteristic of the whole film, whose explosions and eruptions are so extreme as to have an almost amoral, purely physical quality. But nothing better illustrates the film's strong bond with animation than the very existence of RoboCop — revived, in a kind of fantasy denial of death, after Murphy has been turned virtually into a sieve with bullets: "he" doesn't die any more than Tweetie-Pie does when flattened by a steamroller. Despite its symbolic political language, this film actually functions in the pre-linguistic realm of the Imaginary.

This centres on the *figure* of RoboCop. He embodies an infantile, ungendered (oral) vulnerability — suggested by his mouth, significantly the one part of his body visible under the helmet — combined with a fantasy *in*vulnerability, the machine part of him which has the power to carry out incredibly satisfying acts of violence in the name of Good (which fortunately coincides with his own revenge motive). This blond, baby-mouthed (he *eats baby-food*) do-good machine touchingly combines Golem-like stirrings of human feeling with his super-human armoured physique. As an icon this figure is close to that of Rambo — who is equally baby-faced and practically the same shape: i.e. that of an American Footballer.

It hardly needs saying that this image of masculinity which, like Andrex, is soft/strong and very very long, is extraordinarily phallic. But it is also *Romantic*: in the classic sense of a split between inner self and outer shell. RoboCop physically embodies the notion of a child within, a sensitive core to be reached only by the most searching. In conjunction with a rigid masculinity this inner fragility suggests an innocence and lack of culpability that are linked with notions of being "driven" and which can make acts of aggression seem almost poignant (as with sulky-puss Rambo). The fantasy of the metallic body covers a disgust at the frighteningly assailable flesh "beneath" — while at the same time a sentimental attachment to the needs thus contained compensates for their suppression.

What *RoboCop* does, very well, is what many "exploitation movies" do: take a popular, psychoanalytically resonant schlock genre (horror, sex, violence etc) and "fill" its structure with a political slant. What is interesting about *RoboCop* is that in bringing this format to a mainstream production it has become a "phenomenon" in that apparently meaningful but totally unexamined way that many things are in journalism today. It is, as I said, highly enjoyable: but why? Partly, of course, because it is an almost dazzlingly speedy film, whose camera dives in and out of scenes like a big dipper and never leaves us in one place for a second longer than necessary.

But also because it allows us to let loose a very simple, self-dramatising fantasy in the language of a sophisticated knowingness; a double gratification not unfamiliar to followers of various postmodernist theories. In this *RoboCop* couldn't be more of the moment: it provides the left-wing brain with just enough activity to make it feel busy and mask the fact that emotionally and morally it isn't taxed in the slightest. □

Judith Williamson — who, unlike RoboCop, is altogether human — will be taking a break for six weeks.

TELEVISION

Don't forget to switch off the set

Hugo Williams

SOMETHING TELLS ME Chuck's in town. Not that this is an unusual ocurrence; he comes over regularly: hit, git and split, as he says. The difference is that this time he has a book and film to sell and is trying to behave himself. This means murdering the media with his old monkey face at every opportunity and looking more and more like Lionel Blair each time, poor chap. But, whenever he crops up, I drop everything I'm doing and hang on his words as usual. After all, who else is there?

Does he lead a comfortable life? a perceptive cub asked on **Breakfastime** (BBC1). "Yes, since I walled out the insults and held back all the flattery. They sort of cancelled one another out I found." He was being honest out of sheer boredom or tiredness most of the time last week, but I hope for my own sake he hasn't completely abandoned his wicked old "girl-watching ways". In his book — *Chuck Berry: The Autobiography* (Faber, £9.95) — he says he plans a second volume of purely sexual memoirs, "the exposure of truly explicit information about my personal adventures . . .", but you can't be sure he isn't saying this just to taunt the racialists of his youth who linger on in Moral Majority America: one in particular who hurt him maybe, knowing his predilection for the whiter, harsher kind of treatment. A man more equal than most had to accept more inequality than most from the unequal.

I for one hope he doesn't bother with this other project: his style goes into such contortions of kitsch at the onset of each sexual encounter in the present book that you wish he'd just sit down and write one more album of songs about half as good as *You Never Can Tell* before he dies and forget the prosifying. He always wanted to sing like Nat King Cole and his beautiful slow rendering of "Cottage for Sale" in his empty darkened nightclub at the end of *Hail! Hail! Rock 'n' Roll*, with Johnnie Johnson reminiscing on piano in the background, could yet be the key to a new seam.

Something of his lasting commitment to the music could be gauged in a negative way from the continuing vehemence of his feelings about jazz — "which I hate with a passion" — expressed on the show of the minute, **Aspel & Co** (ITV). His music, his times and him were always of a piece, right from the beginning: "I have no kick against modern jazz," he wrote in the 1950s, "Unless they try and play a tune too fast / And spoil the beauty of the melody / Until it sounds just like a symphony."

When taxed with the dreaded sex book by Aspel — "That would be a fairly long book, I suppose?" — he tried to wriggle out of it by claiming it would be some sort of moral crusade against jealousy or something, but admitted he would have to "educate" anyone who messed with his own old lady of 35 years. By the way, I thought it was absolutely *not on* Aspel being allowed to make funny faces to camera while his guest was still talking, *à la* Terry Wogan. Off with his head! Go back to newscaster immediately!

The most potentially interesting treatment of the Master as first-order songwriter came from Mark Steyn on **Review** (BBC2), who compared him to the jump and jive star Louis Jordan, whose guitarist Carl Hogan was Chuck's first influence. Jordan's lyrics, like Chuck's, are always fully intelligible even when they're not intelligent, said Steyn, but he mourned the fact that such a highly developed musician as Chuck Berry had never "developed musically". Like everyone else, he was at a loss for words when it came to the lyrics. Had it taken a lot of tinkering to get the words just right? Chuck laughed almost genuinely for the first time this week: "Yes. I would say so," he said with some feeling.

Wish Me Luck (ITV) is remarkable in that it achieves an even remoter sense of reality than *Hallo! Hallo!*, the French Resistance farce on which it is based. I admit it is never any funnier: the series is really pure will power, a text-book recipe concocted for the '80s out of "The Way To Write A TV Series", Low Budget section. It is done in bursts, because we can't concentrate any more. Each scene is instantly recognisable as one "sort of thing" or another flung together round an accepted cliché such as "Take care, they've increased the spot-checks" or "It's coming through on the emergency frequency!" and quickly cut off with a time-honoured cliff-hanger like "There's something else I should tell you . . ." to forestall our channel-finger.

The question to be answered at the script conference must have been: How can we get lots of pretty girls to take part in WW2 this time around, while their menfolk stay home and look after their rabbits? The solution was to take a small French town, flood it with British starlets and hope the German soldiers swarming everywhere don't notice. Perhaps German people are thick, *nein*? Even when they do happen to notice languid lovely Kate Buffery fleeing a road-block into some woods, she naturally out-runs their alsatian and escapes with a bruised elbow. What is interesting about the show is that, besides will power, its main ingredient is Television itself, in peculiarly undiluted form. What we are aware of throughout are various English actresses in '80s Forties gear acting little television scenes in sets of "Occupied France". The dialogue contrives to reinforce the impression that it is all going on not in 1940s France but right there in the corner of your living-room. The fact it loses nothing of its (slight) interest for all this, suggests that such shows may be unintentionally leading the way out of tele-

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naturalism at last. I don't know whether to cry or laugh. □

We, here, are crying. After seven years of reviewing television for the NS, *Hugo will no longer be writing this column. (Hugo: I don't know whether to cry or laugh. Ed: I do.)*

THEATRE

Here lies America

Victoria Radin

A Touch of the Poet
EUGENE O'NEILL *Young Vic*
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof
TENNESSEE WILLIAMS *Lyttleton*
Children of the Dust
ANNE AYLOR *Soho Poly*
The Quartered Man
DONALD FREED *Shaw Theatre*

"A TALE OF the Possessors Self-Dispossessed" was how Eugene O'Neill saw the USA: a nation unhinged by the same thirst for power that made it great. The phrase was his title for a projected dynastic serial spanning 200 years of American history; but it could be the rallying call for every great American play ever written. At the heart of the works by Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, David Mamet, Sam Shepard, Lanford Wilson, David Rabe — one could go on — is an obsession with littleness within largesse, with the lies, hypocrisies and deformations that result from a blindly materialistic ethos.

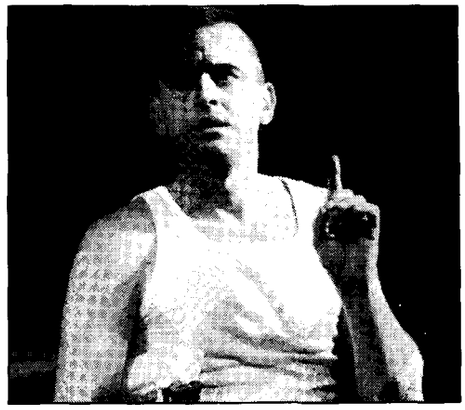
Of his cycle O'Neill completed only **A Touch of the Poet**, written in the late 1930s but set in 1828, when the wave of Irish immigration was battering at the doors of Yankee gentility. His Cornelius Melody is a Possessor who threw it all away: son of a nouveau-riche Irish estate-owner, he fled to the USA after marrying one of his tenants. There he abuses her and their daughter, drinking away what little money their louche tavern earns, declaiming Byron before a mirror, riding his thoroughbred mare while the human women clean, cook and wait table.

He, and the condition of his women, would be intolerable but for his sudden attacks of guilty lucidity which reveal his essential decency struggling with a denatured pride. When a grievous insult to that pride stuns him into reverting to his origins — signalled by a sudden Irish brogue and a political shift to the left — the daughter who was formerly his most derisive critic turns out to be the person who most needs his evasions. *A Touch of the Poet* in many ways prefigures that vast meditation on self-delusion, *The Iceman Cometh*. Fundamentally O'Neill was a pragmatist who believed that lies, however destructive, were necessary to the survival of the liar and to those who live with him. We know that the changed Cornelius is a dead man.

On this rare outing, the play shows itself to be rich in language and imagination, driven forward by a psychological acuity that recalls Freud: the daughter is set to replicate her parents' disastrous marriage, and for baser reasons. David Thacker directs another superbly poised and intelligent production at the Young Vic (it moves to the Comedy Theatre next month), real theatre in a desert of dullness in which Vanessa Redgrave rounds out the underwritten role of the wife with grace and a dazzling stillness that makes a perfect foil to Timothy Dalton's magnetically haunted bastard.

"Lying, dying, lying" says the moribund patriarch in **Cat on a Hot Tin Roof**, and he makes these activities sound like the same thing. Tennessee Williams was as obsessed with what he called "mendacity" as O'Neill, but he held no truck with it at all, under any circumstances. The Politts' Mississippi mansion is foetid with deceit: the passionlessly procreative marriage of the scheming Gooper and malicious Mae; the loveless union of Big Momma and Big Daddy with its denial of Big Daddy's fatal cancer; most of all the fake show-marriage of Maggie the Cat and Brick, whose emptiness is founded on Brick's refusal to see the homosexual basis of his deepest friendship. Behind all the unions lies greed, and Williams, who never minded getting his hands dirty, lets us in on the price of everything from the family plantation to Big Momma's jewellery.

The first act, a virtual monologue for Maggie, is shrill and histrionic and Lindsay Duncan takes it like a boxer, leading from the shoulders. She and Ian Charleson's muted Brick don't make the sexual sparks they should. Eric Porter endows Big Daddy (whom Williams thought one of his best characters) with a marvellous complexity — an old lion seeing the bars of his cage for the first time. Otherwise director Howard Davies excels — and this is typical of so many of his contemporaries — in the safer areas of social satire, with the dim wife (Barbara Leigh-Hunt), the ghastly Gooper and Mae (Paul Jesson and Alison Steadman) and the horrendous little Gooper-Maes turning in perfectly-judged performances. I missed Williams' anger, the unacceptable stink of what he called "spiritual disrepair".



Ian Charleson: a sexually extinguished Brick

Disrepair and dispossession come from forces both within and without a person; and the American-born Anne Aylor makes a mistake in explaining everything from the outside. The result is that **Children of the Dust** becomes a purely political play, one that seeks — fatally, as always — to instruct us in current affairs. Her hero, Webb, is a Vietnam vet in a wheelchair, violent, agoraphobic and crazed, who is saved from himself by the arrival of the young daughter he had fathered by a whore out in Nam.

Aylor has a gift for atmosphere and language and when her play is content simply to probe the relationship between Webb's mother and sister (the excellent Marjorie Yates and Nicola Redmond) or observe that his rich ex-fiancée actually envies him his child, the work succeeds in that backwoods American lyricism we call Dirty Realist. Mostly, though, she is out to teach: and when we are told that the Vietnam War was an "obscenity", and from the unlikely source of the fur-wearing ex-fiancée, it is dull. Terry Johnson directs on the filthily wonderful one-room cabin set of Michael Taylor.

Donald Freed's **The Quartered Man** concerns the US presence in Nicaragua. It is dedicated to Harold Pinter and shudders with good intentions run amok. His American Ambassador to Nicaragua (Don Fellows) is a Machiavelli; his CIA man (Barry Foster) a Graham Greene-ish moral bankrupt who is dying (literally) to return to his youthful idealism. Freed makes the interesting point that there is now a new breed of American "Neanderthal war-whore" who mutated from the rubble of Vietnam; but like the Ambassador, who equates Marxism with Aids, he is painted with a spray-gun. This is grafitti-theatre, which relies on the manipulation of both character and spectator, rather than that painful exposure of the writer's own sense of dispossession which makes enduring art. □

A PLACE WITH THE PIGS
new play by Athol Fugard
British premiere of this comedy-drama based on the true story of a Red Army deserter who hid away in a pigsty for 41 years.
The cast is
LINDA BASSETT & JIM BROADBENT, and directed by ATHOL FUGARD.
Cottesloe: Feb 20, 22, 23m&e, 24.
Mar 4, 5m&e, 7.
Eves 7.30, Mats 2.30
NATIONAL THEATRE
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Embourgeoised *Guardian*

Vic Lansen, London NW3
While I enjoyed reading Jolyon Jenkins' interesting discussion of the new *Guardian* (*NS* 12 Feb.) I was surprised to see no mention of the most likely driving force behind whatever *embourgeoisement* may be taking place on that paper. Such changes come surely not from personal whims, but from the pressures of advertising, whose agencies now rule much of what may be published in this country, particularly in printed periodicals which have come to depend on their revenue to survive.

While there is ambiguous evidence about the actual effectiveness of the advertising industry's creations, what defines the advertisers' world view is the 'right editorial environment' for shifting the products of those (apart from you and me) who are paying for their Pors/lunches. This environment is deemed to be the tawdry triumphalism of (sometimes) re-written press releases, in which optimistic references to products are 'paramount'.

An alternative to this shabby hijacking of editorial independence is not hard to conceive, even on its own terms. After all, non-Tory voters at the last election were spread surprisingly evenly across all income groups, classes, levels of education etc. And there is a ready readership for publications which 'whinge': *Which?*, precisely the wrong environment by agency standards, has gained nearly a million subscribers on the strength of editorial content alone.

What, then, is peculiar about this situation is that agencies are not prepared to be seen to be buying advertising space in any environment less than adulatory about the Thatcherite world as we know it. Their excuse is always the same: 'The client wouldn't like it.'

The *Guardian* has a circulation which is still higher than that of *The Times* or The *Independent*. Its readers may be marginally poorer, but, I dare say, are at least as influential, if in rather different networks. If The *Guardian* feels a need to revise its editorial, it will look too much like a response to pressure from an economic *force majeure* which in any sensible society ought to have its wings clipped severely.

I want to read the paper I read last Thursday. Now, thanks to a bistro-ful of Hooray Henrys, I cannot.

John Murphy, London NW5
Strange to tell, I put down Jolyon Jenkins' interesting discussion of the *Guardian*'s dilemmas, picked up my Saturday *Guardian* to find a sublime illustration of what Jenkins was saying.

There, first, was a sane and balanced editorial, pointing out that private health schemes don't want to provide cover for the old, chronically sick, senile people, kidney patients et al, with the consequent danger that plans to encourage private insurance would leave the NHS "with the most expensive part of health care with fewer — and lower paid — contributors".

I then turned to the new "Choices" supplement (subliminal Thatcherism?) and found an article encouraging the switch to private health care under a chirpy title, "With the NHS in crisis, private schemes are in the pink. We provide a check-up on the fittest." Therein, the reporter laments, "One unfortunate feature of private medical schemes is that they discriminate against the elderly." Quite so; and the chronically sick, senile people, kidney patients, et al.

Who guards the *Guardian*, indeed!

Benn at the bridge

Peter Porteous, Surrey
Once again the knives are out for Tony Benn (*NS* 29 Jan.). Is he to be constantly got at just for being a part of a socialist government that we now know was seriously weakened by what we may euphemistically call 'outside interference' in a not dissimilar way from the ousting of Gough Whitlam's government in Australia?

Of course one needs a Labour Party united as never before, but let us not forget that the situation we are living through now owes nearly everything to the desertion of the faint-hearted four. They left a ship when it needed all hands on deck. If they had stayed on board, to help fight through the then prevailing storms, this country would not have been condemned to the right-wing dictatorship that we have now. Tony Benn stayed and tried to steer us back on course. It is still pretty rough weather we are going through but if we aren't all to end up in the equivalent of political lifeboats we need all the Tony Benns at the bridge of our party we can find — and keep.

Flawed arguments

Frank McManus, Lancashire
Joan Smith's article (*NS* 29 Jan.) almost defies comment! Her claim that the Virgin Birth story "performs too important a function within the Christian religion to allow any doubts to creep in" makes me wonder whether she was in hibernation when the Bishop of Durham successfully held his agnostic ground at the C. of E. General Synod. In fact it is about half a century since Archbishop Temple's commission on "Doctrine in the Church of England" held that the dogma could be interpreted figuratively.

She should not lump "the anti-abortionists" into one extreme block which holds that "the foetus . . . is accorded rights which take precedence" over the mother's. Even SPUC concurs in abortion to save the mother's life, thus putting the mother first.

Joan Smith's claim that "the anti-abortion lobby" is inconsistent, in that it posits an inalienable right to life whilst supporting hanging and H-bombs, is unfair to CND anti-abortionists such as myself; and in any case two wrongs don't make a right!

To say that "the Annunication Syndrome underlies the anti-abortion lobby's every argument" is breathtakingly far-fetched. One doesn't need to be a Christian to recognise that two human entities are involved, namely the mother and the unborn baby; that normally both look for life and health; and that to deny this is to lack in some degree the respect for human individuality which is the basis or a caring society. Of course Alton is cruelly wrong in not providing for late-detected cases of defect or deformity. But Smith's arguments are flawed.

Aids hysteria

Michael Fitzpatrick, London E9
The vituperative tone of Simon Watney's comments (Letters 12 Feb.) on my criticisms of Duncan Campbell's article on Aids reflects the irrationality of the Aids panic of which he is a professional promoter. Watney is so consumed with prejudice that he is obliged to distort and misrepresent my position to suit his own argument. As far as his major charge is concerned — that I omitted to point out that I am the co-author with Don Milligan of *The truth about the Aids panic* — the responsibility lies with the *New Statesman*, who chose not to include this information which I submitted with my letter.

L. A. Kay, Consultant Haemotologist, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Michael Fitzpatrick (*NS* 29 Jan.) rightly draws attention to the fact that Aids virus HIV is transmitted in exactly the same way as hepatitis B. However to use the fact that hepatitis B remains a small problem even in endemic countries as evidence that HIV will not become a huge epidemic defies logic.

For both viruses, 100 per cent of carriers in the incubation period are capable of transmitting virus in their blood and 100 per cent of those suffering the respective illnesses (acute hepatitis or Aids) can transmit.

The incubation period for hepatitis B is 150 days, the illness lasts several weeks, after which 90 per cent of patients clear the virus and become non-infectious. Five per cent die and the remaining 5 per cent become chronic carriers of virus. It is this 5 per cent which provides the major infectious group. Contrast this with HIV infection where the 'incubation' period is from 4-8 years, the illness lasts 3-5 years and is gradual with no clearance of infectious virus, but an increase, and from which recovery has not been reported.

It is these differences in incubation period and virus clearance rates which explain why hepatitis B remains a rare but important problem and

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Aids is potentially species threatening.

A heterosexual epidemic is being disseminated now because of specious arguments like those of your correspondent which encourage a false sense of security and continued risk-taking.

Professional tyranny

Nick Wates/Charles Knevitt, London E14

One is always suspicious when a book reviewer starts off by claiming that the authors should have written about something different! And it might have been helpful to readers of Patrick Hannay's review of our book *Community Architecture* (*NS* Christmas issue) to have been told that Hannay is not only an architect but also the Buildings Editor of the glossy, elitist *Architects' Journal.* Rather like getting a weapons manufacturer who also happens to be the editor of *Jane's Military Review* to write about the first book on the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament!

If, 20 years ago, the left had developed a more imaginative grasp of the politics of the built environment, the public housing programme might not have strangled itself with bureaucracy and paternalism and we might not now be demolishing so many tower, deck access and other blocks which have failed socially as well as structurally. Who knows, the political map of Britain might even be different!

As by far the most hopeful spark in the present bleak environmental scene, community architecture deserves to be treated more seriously by the *New Statesman.*

A large section of the architectural establishment (both right and left) is bound to find community architecture threatening since it challenges many of the sacred cows which have guided the profession for decades, and opens its hitherto often patronising and disastrous working methods to public scrutiny. Perhaps a tenant activist, housing manager or even a community builder would have made a more suitable reviewer.

It is time people were freed from the tyranny of design professionals.

The vast difference

Margaret Hodge, Leader of Islington Council and Chair of Association of London Authorities

There is a lot of justifiable gloom about in Labour town halls at the moment. But party members, both inside and out of local government, should never forget one basic fact. There's still a vast difference between Labour in local government and the Conservatives.

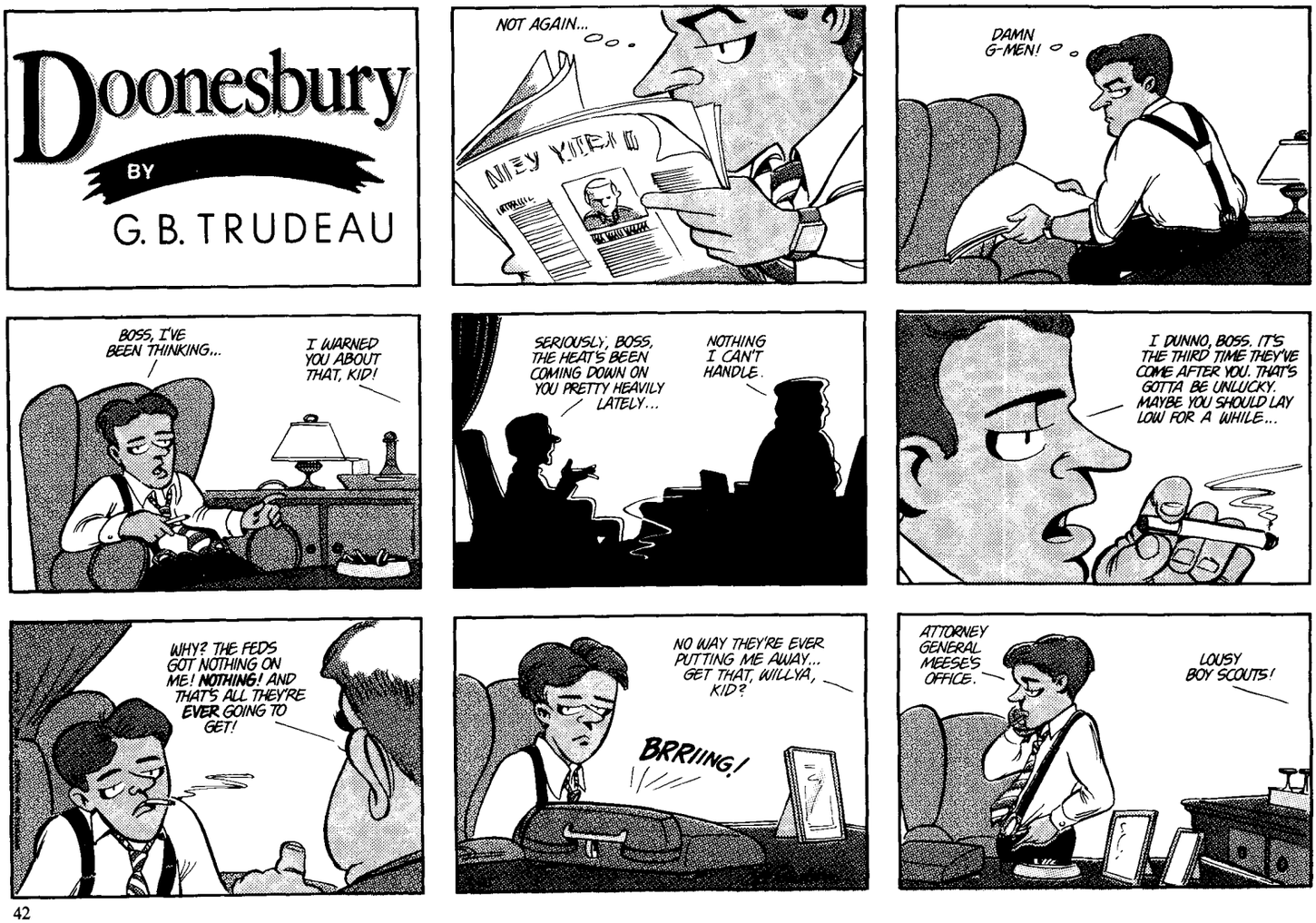
Our anguish as we have to make cuts now is partly a measure of our success over the past years in resisting the government. Current levels of spending could only have been kept up if Labour had won the last general election. That did not happen. Nevertheless, as Howard Davies, the controller of the Audit Commission observed recently at an Adam Smith lecture, Labour councils are still finding ways to provide and spend more than the Tories would have us spend.

Far from being brought to our knees, as Christian Wolmar suggested (*NS* 5 Feb.) we are still building more homes, providing more nursery places and keeping charges lower than Conservative councils do.

Our agenda on equalities is not only impacting in a real way on our local communities, but is now widely accepted. It is being adopted by a growing number of bodies (including the Civil Service!) despite the attempts of the gutter press to ridicule and undermine it. And by developing policies such as decentralisation at the local level, we are able to demonstrate a real socialist alternative to government. Our alternative is one built on participative democratic structures which provide real choice and real control by people on the basis of their citizenship and not their wealth.

Giving up and pulling out of local government may look tempting, but we should remember it's a luxury the poor, the homeless and the unemployed can't afford. In fact, what they want is to be able to turn to Labour in hope. The public will not understand a strategy of withdrawal from office, of people who seek election and then walk out on the job.

Let us hope that the poll tax will cause a more


Doonesbury
BY
G. B. TRUDEAU
NOT AGAIN...
DAMN G-MEN!
BOSS, I'VE BEEN THINKING...
I WARNED YOU ABOUT THAT, KID!
SERIOUSLY, BOSS, THE HEAT'S BEEN COMING DOWN ON YOU PRETTY HEAVILY LATELY...
NOTHING I CAN'T HANDLE.
I DUNNO, BOSS. IT'S THE THIRD TIME THEY'VE COME AFTER YOU. THAT'S GOTTA BE UNLUCKY. MAYBE YOU SHOULD LAY LOW FOR A WHILE...
WHY? THE FEDS GOT NOTHING ON ME! NOTHING! AND THAT'S ALL THEY'RE EVER GOING TO GET!
NO WAY THEY'RE EVER PUTTING ME AWAY... GET THAT, WILLYA, KID?
BRRIING!
ATTORNEY GENERAL MEESE'S OFFICE.
LOUSY BOY SCOUTS!

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spontaneous protest against the government. For we will need more than ever to use our power to show the worth of public services. Providing effective, well-delivered, high-quality public services will distinguish us from the Conservatives and could provide a platform for the next general election campaign. Our ability to target our resources to those in greatest need will become more important. If there is less, it must be distributed in a socialist way. Perhaps, most important, let's not forget our ingenuity at the local level. Our ability to manoeuvre may be lessened, but it's not destroyed.

Michael Ward, Manchester
Christian Wolmar is wrong to predict 'de-politicisation', and the replacement of local government by local administration. For the poll tax might well lead to a more intense local politics — and to a political Dutch auction, in which the interests of the poor and the values of the Labour movement were equally the losers.

The poll tax is part of the fiscal politics of the new Right. The aim of the new Right theorists is to shift the political debate: *from* being about the level of services, *to* being about the level of taxation; *from* being about what you get, *to* being about what you pay.

Labour needs to win the argument about local government, and about using redistributive taxation to fund services now: if it does not, every local election could be fought around the tax rate — and only the tax rate.

Two Owens and a Mosley

David M. Duckels, Driffield
I realise Ben Pimlott (*NS* 5 Feb.) only half adduces the comparison between David Owen — for whom I hold no brief whatsoever — and Sir Oswald Mosley. Nonetheless it is one which should not be made in the terms "the real point about Mosley is his failure". The real point about Mosley was his Fascism! I don't believe anyone is seriously suggesting this about the erstwhile leader of the SDP. Incidentally, could Dr Owen's faction of the SDP not be referred to as "Owenites"? It does derogate, somewhat, from the far more credible memory of Robert Owen.

Advertising stockings

D. P. Williams, Group Product Manager, Pretty Polly, *Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts*
I would like to express my concern about the implications of your recent article which referred to Pretty Polly advertising (*NS* Christmas issue).

My main concern was the implication that all past Pretty Polly advertising had been pathetic, and I feel that the views of Suzanne Moore should be put into the right context. The advertising campaign quoted was produced at a time (1979) when there had been a major fashion shift towards jeans and was devised to make women aware that there was an attractive alternative to such garments. I find it difficult to appreciate how this advertising campaign bears any relevance to the mini skirt trend of either the '60s or '80s.

The most recent television and cinema campaign in 1987, where stockings were featured, has reflected heavily on the independence and resourcefulness of women who are also stylish and sophisticated. I feel that a comparison between Pretty Polly's most recent advertising which happens to be coincidental with the return of the mini skirt serves to support the general tone of the article and is much more in context with the issues raised.

Doctor's orders

Nigel Stanley, Political Assistant to Bryan Gould MP
Tom Gallacher (*NS* 5 Feb.) attacks Bryan Gould for failing to back the Shepherd Bill in the division lobby. A call to our office would have told him that Bryan was confined to bed on doctor's orders. He did struggle in to vote against Alton a week later, *New Statesman* readers may care to note, but even this was well before he was fully fit.

CLASSIFIED ADS: 01-739 1645

New Statesman
Foundation House, Perseverance Works,
38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ

DISPLAY RATES: *£11 per s.c.c.* + VAT (min 3cm)
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DEADLINE: Normally *12 noon Mon.* for *Fri.*
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RUSSIAN LESSONS by Russian born female University graduate. Conditions negotiable. For further details contact (01)881 3864 Monday-Thursday 9-8p.m. Weekends 10-9p.m. W8.4

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'SUMMER JOBS ABROAD', 'Summer jobs Britain' both list 30,000 varied vacancies and cost £5.95 each from bookshops or Vac-Work, 9 Park End Street, Oxford. W3.1

SUMMER JOBS IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY. 6,000 well paid vacancies in 'Vacation Traineeships" £5.95 from bookshops or Vac-Work (N), 9 Park End Street, Oxford. W6.5

Heartsearch & Pursuits £11.50

for minimum of 20wds incl. Box No & VAT (extra words at 45p)

Please complete the coupon below and send with remittance or credit card no.

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Address _____

No. of weeks: _____ Remittance £ _____

Or charge my Access/Visa

Card number: _____

AD for PURSUITS ☐/HEARTSEARCH ☐ **(please tick)**

Post Coupon to: **Classified Dept., New Statesman, FREEPOST, London E2 8BR**

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WRITER WANTED

TALENTED VERSIFIER WANTED to write one short, elegant poem to order. Theme a romantic attachment, style to be suggested by advertiser. Reasonably generous fee offered. Box (07)0559. W8.6

PERSONAL

FEMALE NEWSPAPER RESEARCHER wishes to hear from parents who have adopted babies from Third World Countries, particularly Central and South America and social workers involved. Interested in both the successes and traumas. All replies in strictest confidence to: Box (07)0062. W8.1

MARGARET LAW ca. 1960 King's Drive, Edgware. Whereabouts/information sought by Ernest, rambler, folk dancer who was probably wrong. Box (07)0902. W8.2

PUBLICATIONS

REVIEW COPIES and other books in fine condition bought and sold by Vermillion Books, 57 Red Lion St, London WC1. Tel: 01-242 5822. N49.24

SERVICES

NEOEXPRESS TRANSLATION SERVICE. Telephone 01-388 9188. W8.3

APPOINTMENTS

Contact **Carol Anne Brown or Karen Bielby 01-739 1645** to place your recruitment advertising

OV SELECTION have a number of vacancies for temporary & permanent office staff with typing skills. We welcome enquiries from mature people as well as College leavers. Phone Odette Veazey. OV Selection (Emp. Agy), Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345. N49.34

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The WEA – nationwide voluntary adult education organisation – is looking for part-time tutors in the following subjects: **Archaeology, Assertiveness, Creative Writing, History, Music, Natural History, Philosophy, Politics, Psychology, Trade Union Studies, Art History, Women's Education.**

For further information phone or write to: **WEA, 4 Castle Hill, Rochester, Kent ME1 1QQ. 0634 404237.**

WEA
WORKERS EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION
SOUTH EASTERN DISTRICT

APPOINTMENTS

CONCERNED WITH ANIMAL RIGHTS?

POLITICAL WORKER

This is a new post which offers considerable scope for a person interested in all areas of the political arena.

You will need to develop and expand our links with MP's, local authorities, trade unions, political parties and other groups in order to further the BUAV's aims and objectives.

You must be able to research and collate information, prepare reports and be an effective communicator.

Where appropriate, you will assist with the development of a political component to current and planned BUAV campaigns.

PRESS OFFICER

We need a self-motivated person to build upon our present links with the media and to make new contacts.

Working as part of our campaigns unit, you must be able to exploit the full media potential of our current and planned activities.

You would make regular contributions to our bi-monthly magazine 'LIBERATOR' and assist generally with its production.

You must be able to communicate effectively at all levels. Direct experience of public speaking and media appearances would be an advantage.

INFORMATION OFFICER

The Information Officer will play a central role in the collation and dissemination of all information available to the BUAV.

The Information centre contains an extensive amount of loose filed information together with a collection of books, periodicals, journals and videos, there are also plans to develop a photographic section.

As well as obtaining and researching information, applicants should also be able to create and maintain a library and cross reference information.

In addition to assisting other members of staff, the Information Officer will be required to deal with a wide range of enquirers including local groups, students and media representatives.

Salary for the above posts £9,333 – £10,488

Additional attendance at evenings and weekends may be required. Applicants must be either vegetarian or vegan and committed to the total abolition of vivisection. Our office is a no-smoking zone.

The BUAV is committed to becoming an equal opportunities employer. We welcome all applicants regardless of race, nationality, sex, marital status, sexuality, disability or age.

Please write or phone for an application form, job description and conditions of employment:
Job Applications, British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, 16a Crane Grove, London N7 8LB. 01-700 4888.

Closing date for completed applications is 14th March 1988.

BUAV AGAINST ALL ANIMAL EXPERIMENTS

ANNOUNCEMENT

SOUTH EAST REGION TUC

MAY DAY FESTIVAL
SUNDAY MAY 1st 1988
ALEXANDRA PALACE

A major event to celebrate **May Day** featuring exhibitions, speakers, entertainment, children's activities, etc. **SERTUC** invites trade unions, campaign/pressure groups, political parties, voluntary organisations, international organisations, TU related commercial organisations, etc., to apply for exhibition space.

For full details contact:
SERTUC May Day office, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS. Telephone **01-636 4030, ext. 240/138.**

BILLBOARD

Enquiries: Jenny Shramenko 01-739 1645

Theatre

NATIONAL THEATRE 01-928 2252. Olivier (open stage) **COUNTRYMANIA** (Last Perfs), **'TIS PITY, THE PIED PIPER, THE SMALL FAMILY BUSINESS.** Lyttelton (proscenium stage) **CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF, FATHERS AND SONS** (Last Perfs) **THE PIED PIPER, WAITING FOR GODOT.** Cottesloe (small stage) **A PLACE WITH THE PIGS, ENTERTAINING STRANGERS.** See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256.

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY 01-638 8891. **BARBICAN THEATRE:** Final Perf **A WINTERS TALE** Fri 19, Sat 20 Feb. Final Perf **THE WIZARD OF OZ** Evening Perf 7.30pm. Matinees Thursday & Saturday 2pm. **THE PIT: DeathWatch/The Maids** by Jean Genet, 19, 20 Feb, Final Perfs. **SPECULATORS** by Tony Marchant 22-27 Feb, Final Perfs.

THERAPY

JUNGIAN THERAPY/ANALYSIS, Marital and Psycho-Sexual Counselling. Reasonable rates. London N.W. 01-452 4722. W3.6

AGENDA

Deadline:
2pm Mondays

SARA HALL MEMORIAL LECTURE

BRYAN GOULD MP

Co-operatives, shares and social ownership

Tuesday 1 March, 7.30pm

Grand Committee Room, House of Commons

Send SAE for free tickets to:
Fabian Society, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1H 9BN

FURNISHING THE WORLD
Pat Kirkham, Rodney Mace, Julia Porter

Fully illustrated. This history of east London furniture production uses archive material and interviews as part of its comprehensive analysis.

Journeyman/160pp/108 illus./£10.95

MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY explains reincarnation, karma, God, man and nature. Talks, informal meetings. Sun. 8pm. SAE for free literature, book list. ULT, 62 Queens Gdns. London W2. W43.6

PURSUITS

EARTHMAGIC — PAGAN WOMAN, follower of old religion, socialist/green, vegetarian, devout, humorous, creative, seeks similar women anywhere, especially South Leicestershire. Box (07)0904. W8.7

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HEARTSEARCH

ATTRACTIVE AMERICAN woman with warmth, wit, and spirit seeks a good man (33-43), to start a family. London. Box (07)0892. W8.8

ATTRACTIVE, COMPATIBLE Partners, carefully screened for educated romantics. Personal attention. Reasonable fees. **Hedi Fisher Introductions**, 45/46 Chalk Farm Road, NW1. Tel: 01-267 6066, w/e 01-883 0401. W2.1

COMPANIONS FRIENDSHIP BUREAU. All ages/areas. Unlimited introductions. Special offer this month. Companions, Dept 3A, 185 Thetford Road, Brandon, Suffolk IP27 ODF. W8.9

DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details: Dateline Computer Dating. Dept. (7NS), 23 Abingdon Rd, London W8. Tel. 01-938 1011. N49.20

DRAWING DOWN THE MOON Introduction Agency '. . . could match up an Anais Nin or a Spike Milligan without much difficulty'. (Times Literary Supplement). 01-937 8880, 01-938 2151. W6.27

HANSEL SEEKS GRETEL. Coliseum Sat. 30 January. Blue glasses in Dress Circle. Await sign from the Good Fairy. Box (07)0899. W8.10

MALE 31, of Asian-writing-left-romantic origins needs special woman and time, share/enjoy life. London/Beds. Box (07)0893. W8.11

MALE, 36, single, slim, non-smoking; living in West Midlands likes: music (classical to reggae), drama, cinema, reading, and walking in the countryside, seeks woman for friendship. Box (07)0894. W8.12

MAN, MID-THIRTIES, London, intelligent, good natured, would like to meet a similar woman. Box (07)0903. W8.13

MAN, 59, marriage breaking-up and replanning his future seeks woman, 50-60, hopefully with literary or artistic background, for permanent relationship. St Albans — Watford — North London. Box (07)0897. W8.14

OLDER WOMAN preferred (by Worthing man, 36), for relationship that doesn't 'go all the way'. The preliminaries are more fun! Box (04)0693. W5.25

SINGLE MAN (48), non-smoker, enjoys country walks, music, books, seeks companionship of unattached female, with whom to share these pleasures and, perhaps, more. SE London/Kent. Box (07)0900. W8.15

SINGLES MAGAZINE. Over a thousand new introductions, 12 monthly issues, send £15 (cheque or PO) to Singles Dept. CL, 23 Abingdon Road, London W8 6AH. W49.9

OLD FRIENDS

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MARRIAGE, FRIENDSHIP or COMPANIONSHIP:
the introduction agency for the 40s, 50s, & 60s

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WOMAN GRADUATE, attractive, 50s, W. Midlands but mobile, seeks similar man, who's good company over a bottle of wine, preferably not Liebfraumilch. Box (07)0895. W8.16

WOMAN, PROUDLY 42, unattached, political, non-smoking, humorous, considerate, communicative, feminist, practical, warm, good-looking (considering . .) seeks compatible man, London. Photo? Box (07)0896. W8.17

WOMAN, 51, professional, indeperident financially and personally, looks for male friendship that is equal, intelligent funny and reciprocal. Honesty top priority. Box (07)0901. W8.18

YOU CAN MAKE broken dreams better. Come and meet thinkers who care. FLORA HANDLEY INTRODUCTIONS, The Bookshop, 30 Lambs Conduit Street, WC1. 01-509 2690. W8.19

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Are you looking for that special person or just more invitations to gatherings of kindred spirits? A new organisation — designed for the discerning and sophisticated — wants to help you. Our aim is to build up a circle of friends and to provide more interesting introductions.

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DEPARTMENT OF EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES
RICH WORLD/POOR WORLD?
A Conference on Co-operation for Development

Speakers: **Kenneth Dadzie, Baroness Hart, Sir Peter Marshall, Professor Kenneth Minogue**

Saturday 5 March at 10.15am. Fee: **£11.00**

Enquiries to: **01-636 8000 extension 3852/3833.**

ACCOMMODATION EXCHANGE

HOLIDAY EXCHANGE 1-15 April. Swiss couple, 2 daughters seek flat, Islington. They offer flat Zurich or cottage Italy. 01-607 5131. W8.5

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A BREATH OF FRESH AIR! Explore the Forests and Hills of Southern Germany on foot this summer. Russell Hafter Holidays. (0786) 824515. W8.20

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HAMSTER COTTAGES Quality self-catering cottages throughout Scotland. Brochure tel: 08993 775. W6.11

HOLIDAY/TRAVEL Companions required. All destinations. Contact Odyssey 21 Cambridge Road, Waterbeach, Cambridge CB5 9NJ. 0223 861079. W3.3

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LEARN TO DRIVE whilst on holiday in beautiful North Wales. One and two-week residential courses available. For details, tel: 0248 681256. W6.14

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THE HOTEL, Isle of Colonsay, Argyll, PA61 7YP. Most isolated in G.B. Tel: 095122 316. W2.18

WINTER SUNSHINE. Highly recommended family hotel centre, 3 miles unspoilt beach. From £6 per day. Write Yati Hotel, Jerba, Tunisia, or telephone 010 216 557016. W6.18

WOMAN, 30, seeks travelling companion, woman preferred. India/South East Asia/Australia. Leaving April/May 1988. Box (07)0058. W8.22

WOMEN'S STUDIES/HOLIDAY — combine both in comfortable, quiet seaside cottage in Cornwall. Small groups. Good food and company. Commencing April. £150. Tel: 05035 405. W8.21

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Choice of itineraries: Moscow, Leningrad, Samarkand, Tbilisi etc. Brochure from: **GOODWILL HOLIDAYS, Manor Chambers, School Lane, Welwyn AL6 9EB Tel. 043871 6421 ABTA 94031.**

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FEAST ON FRANCE AT ITS BEST AT 8 MPH
CYCLING FOR SOFTIES
Eight enchanting regions
Superb food and wines
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For our colour brochure phone
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Winners of the BBC Enterprise Award

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HEALTHY VEGETARIAN BREAK. Escape beautiful N. Wales. Enjoy friendly relaxed atmosphere. Vic. farmhouse, chartered walks, riding. £14.00 full board. Brochure: 024878 395. W6.12

JEWISH WOMEN'S WEEKEND. March 4/5/6. Purim at the Hen House—good food, jokes, fancy dress, a movie. £57.50 inclusive, full board. Crocuses gratis. Hawerby Hall, North Thoresby, Lincs. 0472 840278. W6.16

SPRING TOUR TO BULGARIA 16-28 MAY. Price £371 4 nights Sofia (capital) plus 8 nights in Luxury hotel Sandanski Spa (near Greece) at the foothills of Pirin Mountains; lovely walks in picturesque countryside; programme including meeting local people. Excursions and balneological, and other medical treatment available **ORNITHOLOGICAL TOUR 9-21 MAY,** Black Sea and Danube Regions price £398. Youth Brigade 3 weeks August. Ages 17-29, working holiday on archaeological dig and social programme. Details from the **BRITISH-BULGARIAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY,** c/o Finsbury Library, 245 St John Street, London EC1V 4NB. Tel. 01-837 2304. W8.24

SELECT SINGLES HOLIDAYS
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DETAILS FROM:
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LEARN TO PAINT on holiday in the Highlands; May-Sept.: residential courses; professional tuition. Brochure: Julia Wroughton, ARCA, ARWA. Inniemore Lodge, Isle of Mull PA70 6HD. Tel. 06814 201. W6.15

MONTMIRAL PAINTING SCHOOL. A chance for people of all abilities to profit from new research on ways of looking, colour (form, space, light), etc. Distinguished visiting artists. Splendid setting (S.W. France). 12-day sessions (May-Oct). For brochure telephone (0786) 832309. W5.15

ST KILDA
Visit the island on the edge of the world & other off the beaten track Hebridean islands. Enjoy anything from a 4 day mini trip to a week long cruise, savouring the scenic & gastronomic delights of the more remote corners of Scotland. We arrange camping, garden visits & field studies.
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25 Glasgow Street, Hillhead, Glasgow G12 8JW
041 339 0297

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Weekend competition

No 3013 **Set by Russell Lucas**

Initiation ceremonies are now being frowned on in the army; presumably, however, they still flourish in other institutions. Could we have unpleasant starter rites for entrants to the House of Lords, the Women's Institute, the BBC, the MCC, the Convocation of Bishops, or St Paul's Girls' School. Max 120 words by 2 March.

No 3010 **Set by Gray Dorn**

Ads designed to win the readers of women's magazines to nuclear power.

Report **By Ms de Meaner**

Gray Dorn has been helping me with my enquiries and, after several days in my office without his solicitor present, freely confesses that the reason he gave you a maximum of 250 words for this one was to destabilise the liberal-left consensus and hasten the True Revolution. The bruising on his face and the soles of his feet was caused by his tripping on my Isfahan carpet. In any case, there's twelve pounds each to the authors of the *short* BNFL ads below, ten pounds each to Connie and Basil and a Very Special Prize to Will Bellenger – who has, this week, sent his *500th* consecutive entry to the Comp. The bicycle clips signed by Duncan Campbell will be in the post next week, Will.

The brief was: "Come up with something informative on Nuclear Power in not more than 250 words." 250 words? Why so many? That would be *wasting* energy. Celebrate Nature's bounty. Ignore the siren song of Scargill and the cant of Kent. Their rhetoric will never reduce your fuel bills. Laugh aloud at their pretensions.

LET'S HAVE MORE BUNTIN', HOOTIN' AND FISSION!

CHAS. F. GARVEY

When Edith Richmond turns on her kettle or vacuum cleaner each morning, she may not realise that the electricity which powers the tools of the housewife's trade is generated by the same process as that which lights, heats and cleans *Buckingham Palace*. What is this illustrious source of energy? Nuclear Power, of course!

Switch on to Nuclear Fuels: YOU'RE IN GOOD COMPANY.

DAVID ABENHEIMER

Don't Let the Loonies Kid You . . . Fish love our nuclear waste, which is only warm, uranium enriched water. Fish grow bigger quicker, to provide you with tastier and more nutritious protein-packed food for the family meal.

Not Only Safe, but Sensible . . . To tell you the truth, humans exposed to very low-level radiation will, in perhaps 1,000 years, develop marginal problems. But, hey, most of us are not going to *live* that long anyway!

A French Housewife Led the Way . . . It took little Eva Curie to prove to the doubters that radiation cures. Where would we be without it? Our secret laboratory reports suggest that very low-level radiation improves skin-texture, muscle-tone and bone-structure. So you can thank British Nuclear Fuel for that schoolgirl complexion, tighter and prouder pectorals and mannequin posture.

And After Hiroshima? Well, just think about how the Japanese have taken off. Did radiation *give* them that edge in international competition? Yes, it's time that somebody asked the real questions.

CONNIE YAPP

Emotional? Illogical? Capricious?

Forget the clichés. Today's woman hasn't lost her idealism, but she's smart. She doesn't scare easily. That's why BNFL won't insult women by appealing to prejudice. Just listen to the facts:

1. Nuclear power is cheap.
2. Nuclear power is safe.
3. Nuclear power has only peaceful applications.

We're creating a wonderful future for you and your children. Our teams of scientists and engineers, with frank blue eyes preserving a hint of warmth and iron-grey hair just brushing their collars, their powerful bodies contained in well-tailored suits of traditional cut, are putting their minds and hands to a task that has made the world hold its breath. In the pale dawn at Sellafield, gazing across the Irish sea, a smile playing about their firm lips, they are building a dream.

We can sum up that dream in four simple words: Beauty. Novelty. Fidelity. Love. The beauty of a power source that harnesses nature's own power; the novelty of modern techniques; the fidelity you can rely on; the love of country, home and family that only British enterprise can guarantee.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

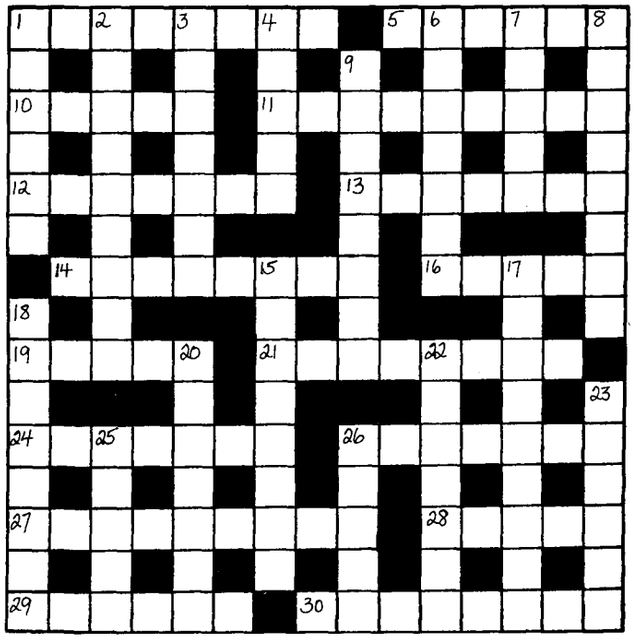
Have a Double-headed Child

Two personalities for the price of one. The two heads will be company for each other, and you will only have one body to feed, wash and change. Thank God for nuclear power.

GEORGE COWLEY

Weekend Crossword 1586

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1586, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ by first post 8 March.



Name_____

Address_____

ACROSS

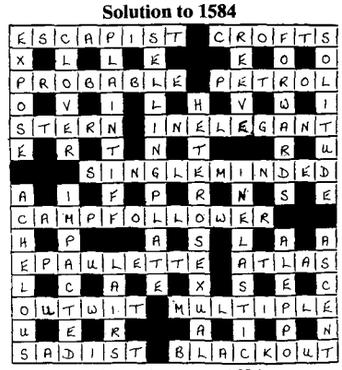
1. Act the critic, giving point to the end (8)
5. Make impotent by destroying tenure (6)
10. Heaps of unstarted building material (5)
11. Holes wreck Rupert and the waters flow back around him (9)
12. The most beautiful quickly contain their temper (7)
13. He travels on water but is a soldier at heart (7)
14. Interval for refreshment comes unusually late in the play (8)
16. Detective who is not quite like a wolf (5)
19. A small piece of territory is occupied (5)
21. Something enjoyable which makes its appeal certain (8)
24. Hairy ones return sweet (7)
26. Get information about the plant (7)
27. It is a mistake to show regret in the open (9)
28. Gets money from two organs (5)
29. Adopting a saying about relatives (6)
30. Deny real change takes place in a cut-off community (8)

DOWN

1. A fellow in a cap is robbed (6)
2. Colouring made of combustible material found outside a ravine (9)
3. Top person almost fit for a biographer (7)
4. Area for publication (5)
6. Thrill which comes during the tenth rally (7)
7. The river marks end of fight over a border (5)
8. Ringing when the others are about to ring a woman (8)
9. Painter who puts one into line (8)
15. I am a favourite but I disappear as a result of the disease (8)
17. Horse with rider on (9)
18. I noted the prime minister is to be found in a place in Italy (8)
20. Crime in which treachery starts taking place over common sense (7)
22. As I seem different, I must be a foreigner (7)
23. Caught out of practice and so bad-tempered (6)
25. Takes minced meat (5)
26. Building in which the echo tells all (5)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1584



Prizewinners to 1584

Jennifer and Julian Hughes
(St Just, Cornwall)
Ms Catriona Grigg (Helsby, Cheshire)
A. L. Morgan
(South Willingham, Lincoln)

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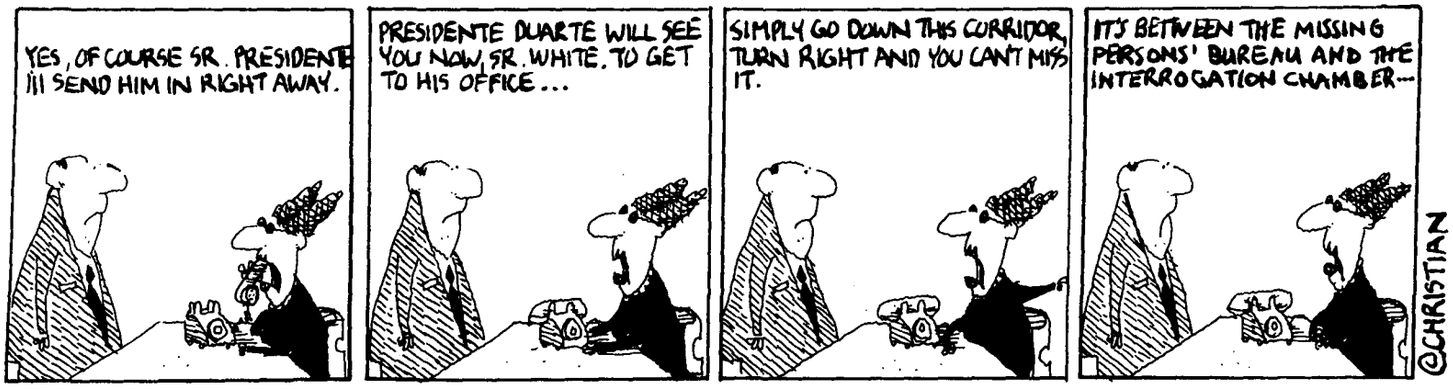

YES, OF COURSE SR. PRESIDENTE I'll SEND HIM IN RIGHT AWAY.
PRESIDENTE DUARTE WILL SEE YOU NOW, SR. WHITE. TO GET TO HIS OFFICE...
SIMPLY GO DOWN THIS CORRIDOR, TURN RIGHT AND YOU CAN'T MISS IT.
IT'S BETWEEN THE MISSING PERSONS' BUREAU AND THE INTERROGATION CHAMBER...
©CHRISTIAN

Chess

IN BOTH the candidates' matches that went into a play-off it was the lower-rated player who won. Hjartarson prevailed over Korchnoi in the second of their extra games, and Kevin Spraggett scored a surprising success when, after a series of draws, he eventually eliminated Andrei Sokolov in a sudden-death play-off.

This means that the pairings for the quarter-finals are: Karpov (USSR) v Spraggett (Canada), Timman (Netherlands) v Portisch (Hungary), Yusupov (USSR) v Hjartarson (Iceland), and Short (England) v Speelman (England). Well, it had to happen some time, Nigel and Jon could not both qualify to challenge Kasparov in 1990. Recent games between the two leading English players give no particular indication of ascendancy for the one or the other. In fact the most notable feature of their encounters has been a succession of whopping blunders!

The English GMs have other rivals apart from each other and Karpov. In a 6-game match in Hilversum in December Jan Timman showed how strong he has become in subduing Ljubojevic by an emphatic 4½-1½. In the first game he treated Ljubo's eccentric opening very severely:

Timman-Ljubojevic, 1st match game. QGD, Slav Defence.
1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. Nc3 dxc4 5. e3 Be6? 6. Ng5 Bd5 7. e4 h6 8. exd5 hxg5 9. dxc6 Nxc6 10. d5 Ne5 11. Bxg5 Qb6 12. Be3! Qxb2 13. Bd4 Nd3+ 14. Bxd3 cxd3 15. 0-0 Qb4 16. Qxd3 a6 17. Rfe1 Rc8 18. Bxf6 gxf6 19. Ne4 Kd8 20. d6 e6 21. Rab1 Qa5 22. Qd4! Bg7 23. Red1 Rh5 24. Qa7! Rb5 25. d7 1-0.

Now to our diagrams. The first is from the game that entered chess history as soon as it was played — the 24th and final game of the Kasparov-Karpov match in Seville. In Karpov's time-trouble Kasparov has ventured a pawn-sacrifice and now threatens 34. Qd8+ and Qxc8. Karpov played 33 . . . Ne7 and after 34. Qd8+ Kh7 35. Nxf7 he lost the b-pawn in a few more moves and was unable to hold the ending with Q+N+3 v Q+B+4. However, in our issue of 8 January I recommended **33 . . . Nc5** as a resource that 'would have won back the title' for Karpov. The point is that 34. Qd8+ Kh7 35. Qxc8 can be answered by 35 . . . Qa1+ and 36 . . . Qxe5. Kasparov seems to have been of this opinion too, since after the game he was telling people that his last move (33 Qb1-d1) has been an inaccuracy, and that the right way to keep up the pressure was 33. Qb5.

Yet Ronald Thomas has written to me from Middlesbrough, claiming that this is not so, and that Black would still be in trouble after **33 . . . Nc5 34. Qd8+ Kh7** if White found the subtle retreat **35. Bd1!.** This is not an easy move to spot. Who looks for retreats when trying to play an attack? But once the move is forced to our attention, its merits become apparent. The check along White's first rank is blocked, thereby renewing the threat of Qxc8, while in certain variations Bc2+ can cause pain. Thus 35. Kg2, though it also counters . . . Qa1+xe5, would not be so effective because Black has 35 . . . f6. But after 35. Bd1 f6 36. Bc2+ wins. The diagonal check is also disastrous for Black in the variation 35. Bd1 Qa1 36. Nxf7 Qf6?? 37. Bc2+.

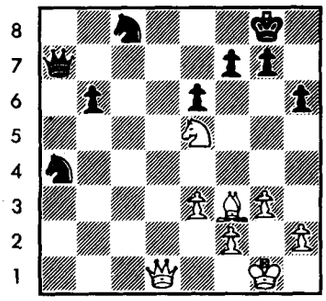
So should White have won anyway, even if Karpov had thought of 33 . . . Nc5? It would be satisfying if we could work this out. Because of the Qxc8 threat there appear to be just two moves to consider in reply to 35. Bd1: [1] 35 . . . Qa1, and [2] 35 . . . Qb7.

[1] **35 . . . Qa1 36. Nxf7 Ne4!?** (if 36 . . . Kg6 37. Nh8+ Kh7 38. Kg2) **37. Kg2 Ncd6** and surely White must win somehow. But how? Neither 38. Bc2 Qb2 nor 38. Qh8+ Kg6 39. Nxd6 Nxd6 40. Bc2+ Kf7 seems particularly clear.

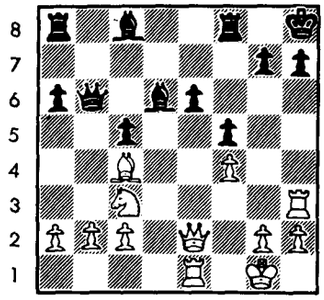
[2] **35 . . . Qb7** There is a repetition available here in 36. Bf3 Qa7 37. Bd1 etc, as pointed out in the February issue of the *British Chess Magazine*. But we assume White is playing for more (as, of course, Kasparov had to). There are several tries — 36. Bc2+, 36. Qe8, 36. Qf8. I favour the simple: **36. Nxf7 Qxf7 37. Bc2+ g6 38. Qxc8** with the b-pawn likely to fall and good winning chances for White. What do you think?

The second position is a crash-bang finish by Tal from a quick-play in Moscow a few months ago. White to play and win. Solution next week.

Position 1 Kasparov-Karpov



Position 2 Tal-Balashov



George Botterill

New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ
Tel: 01-739 3211 (Editorial & Administration)
Telex: 28449/Cables: Newstat, London E2/Fax 01-739 9307
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This England

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☐ Two years after abolishing the mayor with a declaration that "the town hall belongs to the people", Manchester City Council has announced the establishment of an anti-theft security working party. Taking the council at its word, "the people" have removed oil paintings, tables, chairs, television sets, typewriters and brass lamps from the town hall, "Anything that isn't nailed down goes," laments a council spokesman. – *Daily Telegraph* (James Scott)

☐ The rich vein of lunacy in the Poll Tax is slowly being exposed. This week in the Commons Local Government Minister Michael Howard had to admit that while remand prisoners who are found guilty would be able to claim a Poll Tax rebate for the time spent in quod, those found not guilty would have to pay up. – *Daily Mail* (George Moor)

☐ The Institute of Advanced Motorists has run into opposition to the title of its new magazine – *Bollards*. Some members have asked the organisation to change the name. – *Evening Mail* (Dan Pawson)

☐ One in five British men would like to have breakfast with Mrs Thatcher, according to a new survey. She won a one per cent victory over TV presenter Selina Scott. The poll, carried out by Allinson, the health foods producer, also found that actor Paul Newman was the most sought-after breakfast partner among women, followed by Terry Wogan. – *Daily Telegraph* (Pauline Kerr)

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